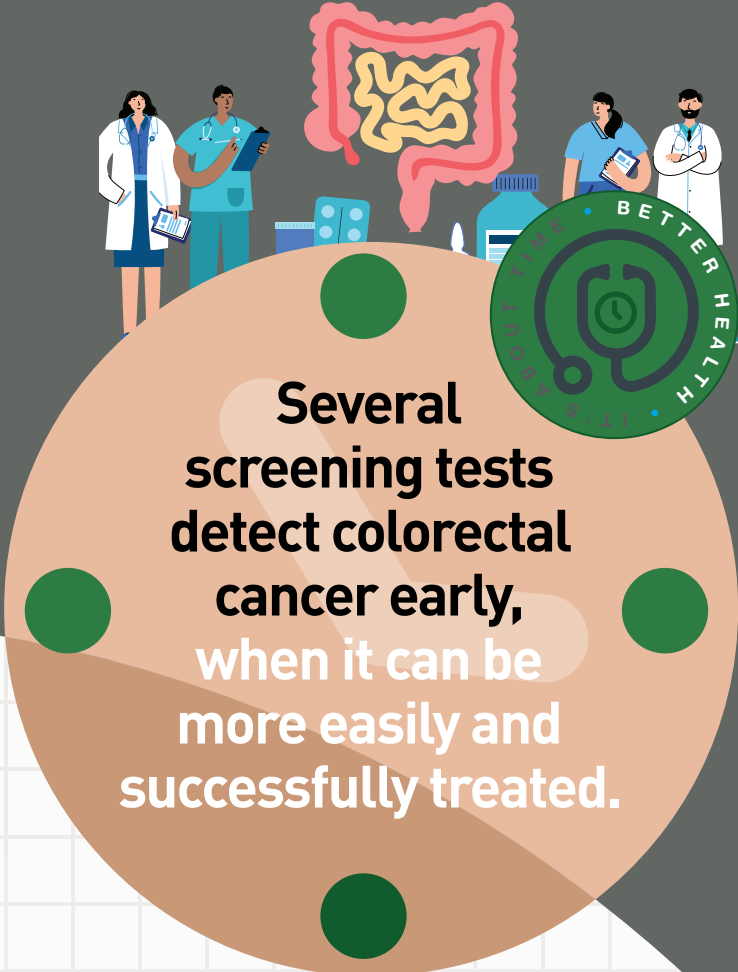


Time Flies

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum. It's as common in women as it is in men. With certain types of screening, this cancer can be prevented by removing polyps (grape-like growths on the wall of the intestine) before they become cancerous.

With so many things to pay attention to in our lives and with our health, time flies. Don't let time fly past your time to begin screening.

- If you're at average risk for colorectal cancer, start getting screened at age 45.
- If you're at higher risk, you may need to start regular screening at an earlier age and be screened more often.
- If you're older than 75, ask your doctor if you should continue to be screened. The best time to get screened is before you have any symptoms.



Several screening tests detect colorectal cancer early, when it can be more easily and successfully treated.

Who is at risk

- People age 50 and older
- People who smoke
- People who are overweight or obese, especially those with fat around their waists
- People who aren't physically active
- People who drink alcohol in excess, especially men
- People who eat a lot of red meat (such as beef, pork, or lamb) or processed meat (such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, or cold cuts)
- People with personal or family histories of colorectal cancer or benign (not cancerous) colorectal polyps
- People with personal histories of inflammatory bowel disease (such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease)
- People with family histories of inherited colorectal cancer or inherited colorectal problems



HOW TO REDUCE RISK

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes, at least five days a week.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke. If you do smoke, quit.
- Have no more than one alcoholic drink per day if you're a woman or two if you're a man.
- Eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to help you get and stay healthy.
- Eat less red meat and cut out processed meat.

+50

Being older than 50 years of age



Use of alcohol and tobacco



Lack of physical exercise



Low-fiber diet



Personal history of inflammatory intestinal conditions



Family history of colon cancer

Tests that find pre-cancer and cancer:

- Colonoscopy
- Virtual colonoscopy
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Double-contrast barium enema

Tests that mainly find cancer:

- Stool occult blood test (FOBT) (guaiac)
- Stool immunochemical test (FIT)
- Stool DNA test (sDNA)

Symptoms

Early stages of colorectal cancer don't usually have symptoms. Later on, people may have these symptoms:

- Bleeding from the rectum or blood in or on the stool
- Change in bowel habits
- Stools that are more narrow than usual
- General problems in the abdomen, such as bloating, fullness, or cramps
- Diarrhea, constipation, or a feeling in the rectum that the bowel movement isn't quite complete
- Weight loss for no apparent reason
- Being tired all the time
- Vomiting

If you have any of these symptoms, see your health care professional.

Treatment

Surgery is the most common treatment. Once the cancer has spread, chemotherapy or radiation may be given before or after surgery.

