

Fact or Fiction: Colorectal Cancer

Don't let common myths stop you from getting the life-saving screening tests you need, when you need them. Together, you and your health care provider can decide which test will be right for you.

FICTION	FACT
Colorectal cancer isn't common in women.	Overall, the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 23 (4.3%) for men and 1 in 25 (4.0%) for women.
Colorectal cancer cannot be prevented.	<p>In many cases, colorectal cancer can be prevented. Colorectal cancer almost always starts with a small growth called a polyp. If the polyp is found early, it can be removed - stopping colorectal cancer before it starts.</p> <p>Consider these steps to reduce the risk of getting colorectal cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Get to and stay at a healthy weight throughout life. ▶ Be physically active. ▶ Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. ▶ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and less red or processed meat. ▶ Don't use tobacco in any form.
African Americans are not at risk for colorectal cancer.	African-American men and women are diagnosed with and die from colorectal cancer at higher rates than men and women of any other U.S. racial or ethnic group. The reason for this is not yet understood.
Age doesn't matter when it comes to getting colorectal cancer.	Most colorectal cancers are found in people age 45 and older. People who are at a higher risk for colorectal cancer—such as those who have colon or rectal cancer in their families—may need to begin testing at a younger age. Talk to your doctor about when you should start getting tested.
It's better not to get tested for colorectal cancer because it's deadly anyway.	Colorectal cancer is often highly treatable. If it's found and treated early (while it's small and before it has spread), the five-year survival rate is about 90 percent. But because many people are not getting tested, only about 4 out of 10 are diagnosed at this early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful.

For more information about colon cancer, visit the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org/colon