

## Common Excuses For Avoiding Colonoscopy

**The prep** - While it is required to take a laxative prep to empty the colon, there are many newer options available. Some of these preps offer a lower volume of liquid to consume.

**Fear of pain** - There is no pain during a colonoscopy as patients are sedated. There should be no memory of the experience. Normal activities can be resumed the next day.

**Fear of complication** - The risk for complication during colonoscopy is very low. Less than 1 in 1000 will experience any complication. The chance of developing colon cancer is much higher at 1 in 20 in a lifetime.

**Lack of symptoms** - Many colon cancers are found in individuals with no symptoms. Recommendations for screening colonoscopy are set in place to find a polyp early, **before** it develops into cancer.

**Lack of risk factors** - Anyone can get colon cancer. You do not need to have a family history. Age over 50 is a risk factor on its own.

**There are no excuses that should prevent you from scheduling a colonoscopy!**

## Everyone Over 50 Is At Risk

- Over 90% of colon cancer occurs in adults at least 50 years of age.
- Start colonoscopy screenings at age 50 even in the absence of risk factors or lack of symptoms.

## How Can I Reduce The Risk Of Colon Cancer?

- ✓ Get screened regularly
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Limit red meat, particularly processed meat
- ✓ Increase physical activity
- ✓ Limit alcohol consumption
- ✓ Avoid tobacco
- ✓ Eat a balanced diet with emphasis on fruits and vegetables

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## Learn More About Screening Colonoscopy & Colon Cancer

Connecticut GI  
[www.ConnecticutGI.org](http://www.ConnecticutGI.org)

# Colon Cancer

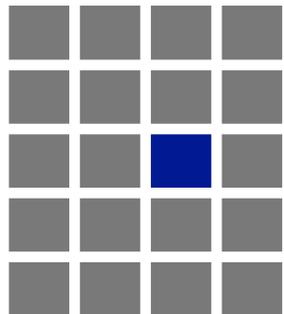
Screening Colonoscopies  
Save Lives!



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## What Is Colorectal Cancer?

- Colon cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, is a malignancy of either the large intestine (colon) or rectum.
- It is the most common cancer of the digestive tract.
- It is the second most common cause of cancer death in the United States.
- Colon cancer is also one of the most **preventable** types of cancer. A colonoscopy can detect and remove a polyp, or precancerous growth.
- The risk of developing colon cancer increases with age, particularly over age 50.



**1 in 20 people  
will be  
diagnosed  
with colon  
cancer in  
their lifetime**

**Did You Know?**  
**60% of deaths from colon cancer  
could be prevented if everyone  
over age 50 had a colonoscopy**  
**1 in 3 adults over age 50 has not  
been screened for colon cancer**

## Are You At Risk?

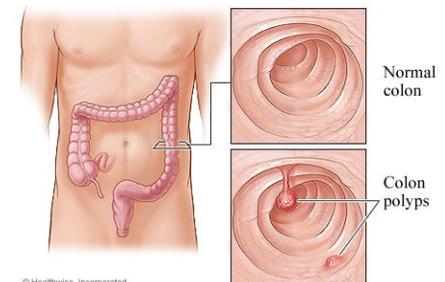
- Over age 50
  - Physically inactive
  - Smoker
  - Obese
  - High alcohol intake
  - Diet high in fat or red & processed meat
  - Family history of colorectal cancer or colon polyps
  - Personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis)
  - Personal history of a genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis or hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer.
- **Screening colonoscopy should begin at age 50 for the general population.**
  - Higher risk individuals may need testing before age 50 or more often.

## Symptoms Of Colon Cancer

- Change in bowel pattern
- Blood in stool
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Stools that are thin
- Fatigue
- Anemia

## A Screening Colonoscopy Could Save Your Life

- There is a 90% five year survival rate if colon cancer is found in an early stage with a screening colonoscopy.
- A colonoscopy is a procedure done under sedation allowing direct visualization of the colon.
- Most colorectal cancers begin as a polyp, which is an abnormal growth in the lining of the colon.
- Some polyps have potential to develop into cancer over time.
- Screening colonoscopy can find and remove polyps before they ever turn into cancer. Screening may also detect a cancer in its early stages, increasing the chance of a cure.



## Alternative Screening Methods

- **Stool testing for microscopic blood**
- **DNA stool test**
- **Barium Enema**
- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy**
- **Virtual colonoscopy**