



COLORECTAL CANCER

What Is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon and rectum. The colon and rectum are part of the digestive system.

Risk Factors

- Aging
- Family history
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Colon polyps
- High dietary fat intake

Symptoms

- Blood in the stool
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Chronic fatigue
- Feelings of bloating, fullness or cramping
- Frequent gas pains
- Feeling that the bowel doesn't empty completely
- Unexplained weight loss
- Stools that are smaller in width than usual

How Is Colorectal Cancer Detected?

- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) – a test of your stool for blood.
- Sigmoidoscopy – a test that looks inside the rectum and lower part of the colon.
- Colonoscopy – a test that looks at the inside of the rectum and the whole colon.
- Barium Enema – a test that uses an x-ray machine to look at the colon.

Steps to Lower Your Risk of Colorectal Cancer

- Get regular colorectal screening tests beginning at age 50. If you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, polyps, or inflammatory bowel disease, you may need to be tested earlier. Consult your doctor.
- Maintain a healthy weight by eating a low-fat diet including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Drink only in moderation.
- Quit smoking.
- Exercise for 30 to 60 minutes a day.

If you experience any of these symptoms, schedule an appointment with your doctor.