

Health Awareness for April is Colon Cancer

Question? So how does Colon Cancer start?

Colon (colorectal) cancer starts in your colon (large intestine), the long tube that helps carry digested food to your rectum and out of your body. The Colon Cancer develops from [certain Polyps](#) or growths in the inner lining of your colon. Colon cancer that's not detected or treated may spread to other areas of your body.

Over time, colon polyps may become cancerous. (It usually takes about 10 years for cancer to form in a colon polyp.) Left undetected and/or untreated, the cancer works its way through a layer of tissue, muscle, and the outer layer of your colon. The colon cancer may also spread to other parts of your body via your [lymph nodes](#) or your blood vessels.

Who is affected by colon cancer?

Colon cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in people in the U.S. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), men are slightly more likely to develop colon cancer than women and Colon cancer affects more people who are Black than people who are members of other ethnic groups or races.

Colon cancer typically affects people aged 50 and older. Over the past 15 years, however, the number of people aged 20 to 49 with colon cancer has increased by about 1.5% each year. Medical researchers aren't sure why this is happening.

What are the colon cancer symptoms?

Learn the six most common signs of colon cancer. You can have colon cancer without having symptoms. If you do have symptoms, you may not be

sure if changes in your body are signs of colon cancer. That's because some colon cancer symptoms are like symptoms of less serious conditions. Common symptoms of colon cancer include:

- A change in bowel habits that lasts for more than a few days, including diarrhea, constipation and change in stool caliber.
- Bright red or very dark red blood in your stool.
- Constant fatigue.
- Cramping, abdominal pain or bloating.
- Unintended weight loss.

What should you do?

If you have any signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer, do not ignore them. Go see your doctor immediately. Cancer of the colon is a highly treatable and often curable disease when localized to the bowel.