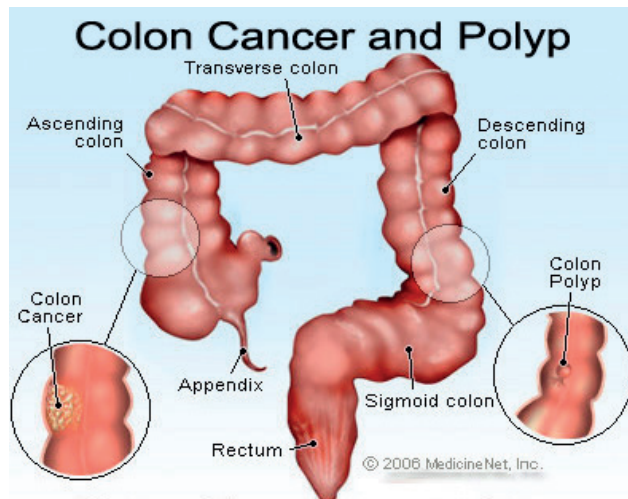


# Colorectal Cancer

## What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Most colorectal cancers start as a polyp- a growth that starts in the inner lining of the colon or rectum and grows toward the center. Most polyps are not cancer. Only certain types of polyps (called adenomas) can become cancer. Taking out a polyp early, when it is small, may keep it from becoming cancer.



## Am I at risk?

Being over 50 years old increases your chance of colon cancer. Other factors that may increase your chance of colon cancer include:

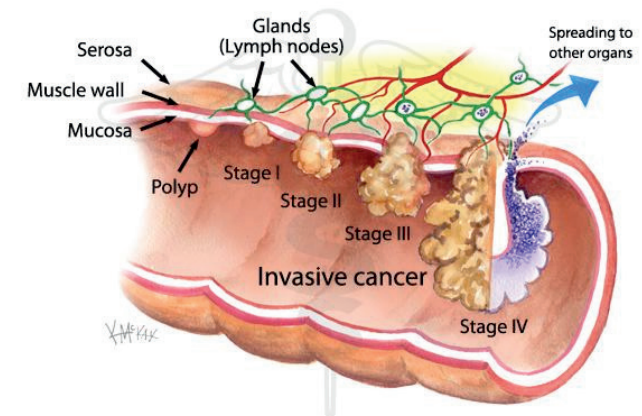
- Personal history of colon or rectal cancer, or polyps
- Having a history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- Family history of cancer
- Race or ethnic background such as being African American
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Hereditary conditions such as familial adenomatous polyposis, Lynch syndrome
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Heavy alcohol intake
- Smoking
- Certain types of diets: a diet that is high in red meats (beef, lamb, or liver) and processed meats (like hot dogs, bologna, and lunch meat) can increase your colorectal cancer risk.
- Cooking meats at very high heat (frying, broiling, or grilling) can create chemicals that might increase cancer risk

## Staging of Colorectal Cancer

Staging is the process of finding out how far the cancer has spread. This is very important because your treatment and the outlook for your recovery depend on the stage of your cancer. For early cancer, surgery may be all that is needed. For more advanced cancer, other treatments like chemotherapy or radiation therapy may be used.

There is more than one system for staging colorectal cancer. Some use numbers and others use letters. But all systems describe the spread of the cancer through the layers of the wall of the colon or rectum. Colorectal cancer starts in the inner layer and can grow through some or all of the other layers. Staging also takes into account whether the cancer has spread to nearby organs and lymph nodes or to organs farther away.

Stages are often labeled using Roman numerals I through IV (1-4). As a rule, the lower the number, the less the cancer has spread. A higher number, such as stage IV (4), means a more advanced cancer.

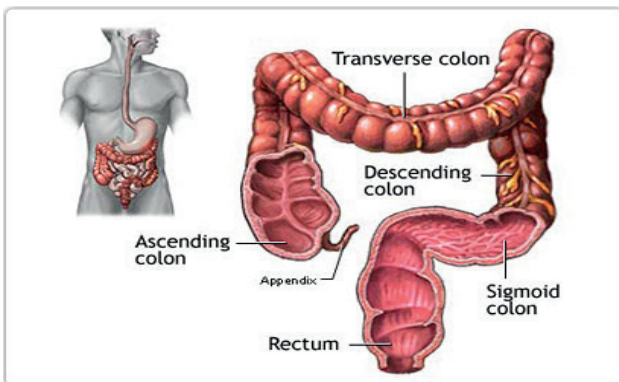


## Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer

*In most cases, there are no symptoms with colon cancer. When symptoms do appear, they may include:*

- A change in bowel habits
- Blood, either bright red, or black and tarry, in the stool
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- General abdominal discomfort, such as frequent gas pains, bloating, fullness, and/or cramps
- Unexplained weight loss
- Constant feeling of fatigue or tiredness

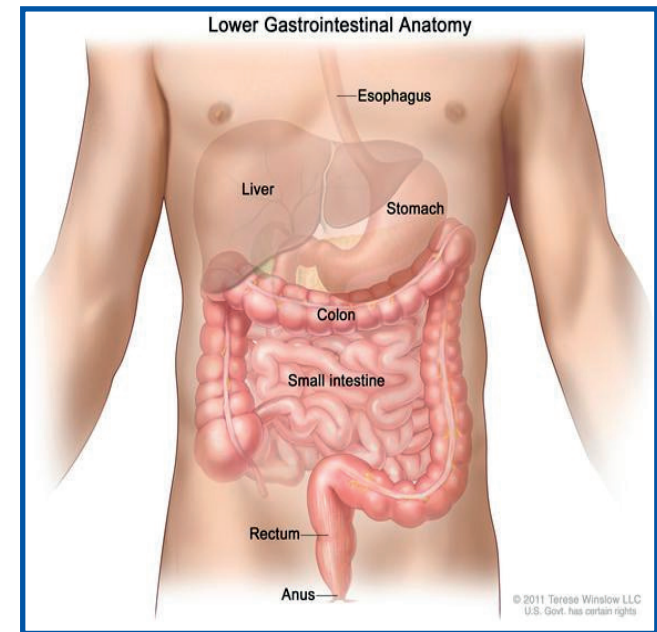
Most of these symptoms are more often caused by something other than colorectal cancer. Still, if you have any of these problems, it's important to see a doctor right away so the cause can be found and treated, if needed.



## The 4 main types of treatment for Colorectal Cancer are:-

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy ("chemo")
- Targeted therapies (like monoclonal antibodies)

Depending on the stage of your cancer, 2 or more types of treatment may be used at the same time, or used one after the other. You may want to get a second opinion which can give you more information and help you feel better about the treatment plan you choose. Your chances of having a good outcome are highest in the hands of a medical team that has experience in treating colorectal cancer.



## REFERENCE

American Cancer Society. Colorectal Cancer Overview [online] 2013[cited 2013 Oct 2].

Available from: URL:

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/colonandrectumcancer/overviewguide/colorectal-cancer-overview-what-is-colorectal>

## Know Your Medicine

This pamphlet was prepared by the Pharmacists at SuperPharm Ltd. Gulf View and is intended to serve as an educational guide alongside your doctor's advice. Be sure to contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about the topics discussed in this pamphlet.

### Compiled By:

Nandini Ramsumair, Khadija Dorset  
Judah Mohamed & Samantha Keshwar

## Know Your Pharmacist

### Contact SuperPharm

Tel: 800-4WOW or 868-675-5666  
E-Mail: [info@superpharmtt.com](mailto:info@superpharmtt.com)  
Website: [www.superpharm.co.tt](http://www.superpharm.co.tt)  
[www.facebook.com/superpharmfans](https://www.facebook.com/superpharmfans)

- Westmoorings: ext 2101 •Maraval: ext 2501
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