



WHAT IS COLORECTAL CANCER?



- When cancer starts in the colon or rectum, it is called colorectal cancer.
- Sometimes abnormal growths, called polyps, form in the colon or rectum. Over time, some polyps may turn into cancer.

Who gets Colorectal Cancer?

- Men and women both can get colorectal cancer.
- It is most often found in people who are 45 years and older.

What are the symptoms?

- Sometimes there are no symptoms.
- Blood in your stool (poop).
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that do not go away.
- Losing weight and you do not know why.

Can it be found early?

Screening can often find colorectal cancer early, when it is small and has not spread. Regular screening can even prevent colorectal cancer.

Who should get a screening?

- Adults age 45-75 should be screened for colorectal cancer.
- You may need to be tested earlier than 45, if you or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

- A diet low in animal fats and high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains may reduce risk of colorectal cancer.
- Get at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate physical activity each week or 75 to 150 minutes of high intensity activity (running, jogging) each week.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Do not use (commercial) tobacco.

What tests are available?

Talk to your doctor about which test are right for you.

- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) to find blood in the stool (poop).
- Fecal immunochemical test (FIT) to find blood in the stool (poop).
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy is when the doctor checks for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and lower third of the colon.
- Colonoscopy is when the doctor uses a long, thin, and flexible lighted tube to check for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and the entire colon. During the test, the doctor can find and remove most polyps and some cancers.

If you are 45-75 years old, talk to your health care provider or call your local IHS, tribal or urban Indian health clinic to schedule a test for colorectal cancer.

