



# Facts about Colorectal Cancer

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## What You Should Know

- Colorectal cancer is a significant cause of cancer-related death in Michigan, and is a commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women.<sup>1</sup>
- Men and women aged 50 years and older who are at average risk for colorectal cancer are encouraged to have one of the following tests in the recommended time frame<sup>2</sup>:

### Every year:

- ✓ Guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) (testing for blood in the stool) *or*
- ✓ Fecal immunochemical test (FIT) (testing for blood in the stool)

### OR

### Every five years:

- ✓ Flexible sigmoidoscopy (procedure to examine the lower portion of the colon) *or*
- ✓ Double-contrast barium enema (X-ray of the colon) *or*
- ✓ Computed tomographic colonography (CT scan of colon and rectum)

### OR

### Every five years and every year:

- ✓ Fecal occult blood test every year plus a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years

### OR

### Every ten years

- ✓ Colonoscopy (procedure to examine the entire colon)

- Men and women considered to have additional risk factors are encouraged to have recommended testing at a younger age and more frequently.<sup>2</sup>

## Risk Factors

- The chances of having colorectal cancer increases after age 50. More than 9 out of 10 people with colorectal cancer are older than 50 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Other risk factors include: a personal history of colon cancer, colon polyps, or inflammatory bowel disease, and a family history of colorectal cancer.<sup>3</sup>
- The two most commonly inherited syndromes linked with colorectal cancer are familial adenomatous polyposis (many colonic polyps) and hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (few, if any polyps). Inherited mutations in any of the genes contributing to these conditions could put an individual at a high risk of developing colorectal cancer.<sup>3</sup>
- A diet high in red or processed meat, inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables, physical inactivity, obesity, smoking, and heavy use of alcohol may also increase the risk of developing colorectal cancer.<sup>3</sup>

## Incidence and Mortality

- In Michigan, 5,056 individuals were diagnosed with invasive colorectal cancer in 2007, and 1,820 individuals died from the disease in 2008.<sup>4,5</sup>
- The American Cancer Society estimates that 141,210 Americans will be diagnosed with colon and rectum cancer and 49,380 Americans will die from colon and rectum cancer in the United States in 2011.<sup>3</sup>
- Since the 1990s there has been a decline in colorectal cancer incidence and mortality in Michigan, as well as nationally.
  - ✓ In Michigan, colorectal cancer incidence rates declined from 60.8 cases per 100,000 individuals in 1998 to 47.0 cases

per 100,000 in 2007.

- ✓ Nationally, colorectal cancer incidence rates declined from 56.7 per 100,000 in 1998 to 44.7 per 100,000 in 2007.
- ✓ Mortality rates in Michigan declined from 21.3 per 100,000 in 1999 to 16.7 per 100,000 in 2008.<sup>4,5</sup>
- ✓ Mortality rates also declined nationally from 21.2 per 100,000 in 1998 to 16.7 per 100,000 in 2007.<sup>6</sup>
- Between 2003 and 2007, Michigan ranked 26th in the nation in colorectal cancer mortality.<sup>6</sup>
- In Michigan, as well as nationally, the incidence of colorectal cancer is higher among men compared to women. Men also die from colorectal cancer at a higher rate than women.<sup>4,5,6</sup>
- The incidence of colorectal cancer is higher among African Americans compared to Caucasians. Furthermore, African-Americans are more likely than Caucasians to die from colorectal cancer.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

### Stage at Diagnosis

- Only about 40% of colorectal cancers are diagnosed at the localized stage, mostly due to low screening rates.<sup>3</sup>
- Of individuals diagnosed with colorectal cancer at a localized stage, 91% will survive at least five years. The five-year survival rate declines to 70% when diagnosed at a regional stage (cancer has spread to surrounding tissues) and 11% when diagnosed at a distant stage (cancer has metastasized).<sup>3</sup>
- Five-year survival rates vary by race and ethnicity. African-Americans diagnosed with colorectal cancer at any stage are less likely than whites to survive up to five years. At the localized stage, the five-year survival rate for African-Americans is 85.1%, compared to 90.6% for Caucasians in Michigan.<sup>8</sup>
- In Michigan, 40.7% of colorectal cancer cases diagnosed in 2007 were found at a localized stage (confined to the colon or rectum). Among men, 40.1% of newly diagnosed cases were diagnosed at the localized stage and 41.2% of newly diagnosed

cases were at the localized stage among women.<sup>8</sup>

### Screening Behaviors

- Approximately 44.5% of Michigan adults aged 50 years and older have ever used a home fecal occult blood test to determine the presence of blood in their stools. Women are more likely than men to have used the test (45.0% vs. 44.0%).<sup>7</sup>
- Of Michigan adults aged 50 years and older, 70.9% have had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy exam at least once during their lifetime. Those with lower education levels and lower income levels were less likely to have ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2010, nearly 67% of adults aged 50 years and older had a sigmoidoscopy in the past five years or colonoscopy in the past ten years.<sup>7</sup>

### References:

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