

CAREZONE



MARCH/APRIL 2024

What are the Causes and Risk Factors of Colorectal Cancer?

The exact causes of colorectal cancer are not known. Common risk factors include:

- **Family history of colorectal cancer:** Close relatives (parent, brother, sister, or child) who have had this cancer, your risk is increased.
- **Ethnic background:** Jews of Eastern European descent (Ashkenazi Jews) have a higher rate of colon cancer.
- **Previous colorectal cancer:** Even if a colorectal cancer has been completely removed, new cancers may start in other areas of your colon and rectum.
- **Polyps:** Polyps are common in people older than age 50 and some become cancerous.
- **History of bowel disease:** The disease ulcerative colitis (Crohn's disease) increases the risk of colon cancer. In this disease, the colon is inflamed over a long period of time and may have ulcers.
- **Age:** Colorectal cancer is more common in people older than age 50 and the risk increases with age.
- **Diet:** A diet high in fat, especially fat from animal sources, can increase the risk of colorectal cancer.
- **Lack of exercise:** People who are not physically active have a higher risk of colorectal cancer.
- **Smoking:** Smokers are 30-40% more likely than nonsmokers to die of colorectal cancer.
- **Alcohol:** Excessive use of alcohol has been linked to colorectal cancer.

March: Colorectal Cancer Awareness

Colorectal cancer starts in the colon or rectum. Colon and rectal cancers begin in the digestive system, also called the gastrointestinal (GI) system. In most cases, colon and rectal cancers develop slowly over a period of several years, have many features in common, and are often referred to as "colorectal cancer." Most colorectal cancers begin as polyps – tiny, grape-like growths inside the colon or rectum that may become cancerous.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women, and the second most common cause of U.S. cancer deaths when men and women are combined. Screening tests, including colonoscopies, are one of the best ways to prevent colorectal cancer. Screening can often find colorectal cancer early, when it is most likely to be cured.

There are often no symptoms of colorectal cancer in its early stage. When symptoms are present, they include one or more of the following:

- a change in bowel habits
- diarrhea, constipation or a feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- blood (either bright red or very dark) in the stool
- stools that are narrower than usual
- general abdominal discomfort, bloating and fullness, frequent gas pains, cramps
- unexplained weight loss
- constant or unusual tiredness
- vomiting

These symptoms may be caused by advanced colorectal cancer or some other condition. It is important to report any of these symptoms to your health care provider.

To help prevent colon cancer, get regular screenings beginning at age 45. If you have a family history, check with your doctor about getting screened earlier. Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, whole grain foods and limit high-fat foods and red meat. Engage in physical activity, at least 30 minutes per day, at least five days per week. Don't smoke. If you do, and need help quitting go <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/> or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Previous issues of our newsletters can be viewed under

"Resources" > Newsletters at: www.MC-Rx.com



APRIL IS MOVE MORE MONTH!

What are you doing in April to stay active?

Did you know that one in three adults over the age of 50 gets no physical activity outside of work? It's time to make a change!

Physical Activity Tips and Tricks

- **Fit in 150:** Get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity (or a combination of both), preferably spread throughout the week.
- **Move More, Sit Less:** Get up and move throughout the day. Any activity is better than none. Even light-intensity activity can offset the serious health risks of being sedentary.
- **Add Intensity:** Moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise is best. Your heart will beat faster, and you'll breathe harder than normal. As you get used to being more active, increase your time and/or intensity to get more benefits.
- **Add Muscle:** Include moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (like resistance or weight training) at least twice a week.

Remember, fitness and health journeys can often times be frustrating, but they don't always have to be. Taking a simpler approach versus implementing unrealistic fitness goals and enrolling in expensive gym memberships, can take you a long way. Remember, moving more can create an overall healthy lifestyle for your stress, mental health, social connections, sleep, and so much more!

<https://www.heart.org>

Building Up Your Knowledge – Alzheimer's (5-Part Series)

Alzheimer's disease is a type of brain disease that causes problems with memory, language, and thinking. You may know these symptoms as "dementia". Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.

A key part of Alzheimer's disease is the buildup of Amyloid Proteins.

When pieces of proteins – called amyloid proteins – stick together in the brain, they can form plaque. A buildup of amyloid plaque in the brain may make it difficult for brain cells to communicate with each other.

As amyloid proteins build up, communication between brain cells continues to break down, making it harder for brain cells to do their job. Over time, this ongoing buildup can make it difficult to do things like think, remember, and problem-solve.

The ongoing buildup of amyloid brain plaque can lead to Alzheimer's disease progression – when symptoms such as forgetting dates and events, trouble remembering words, or difficulty with familiar tasks may get worse. The sooner you talk to your healthcare provider about your symptoms, the more options you may have available that can help.

-- 2023 Eisai Inc. and Biogen