



Be brave and pick up the phone...

Scheduling your screening can actually help prevent colorectal cancer



Over our lifetimes, about one in 20 of us will develop colon cancer, also called colorectal cancer.¹ When it is caught early, survival rates are better than 90 percent.² That's why regular screenings are so important.

What is colon cancer?

Your colon is part of your large intestine. It absorbs water from the food you eat and turns the rest into waste.³ Most of the time, colon cancer starts in cells that make mucus and other fluids.⁴

Normally, cells grow as your body needs them, to replace old cells as they die. But sometimes new cells form more quickly than they are needed, or old and damaged cells do not die. They can form tumors, or move to other parts of the body. Colon cancer doesn't usually cause symptoms early on, so you should have regular screenings for colon cancer beginning at age 40 or 50, depending on your risk factors.⁵ Risk factors include:⁶

- Being older than 50.
- Having type 2 diabetes.
- Being African American or a Jewish person of Eastern European heritage.
- Having a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or polyps.
- Having a history of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Talk with your doctor about how often you should be screened, and when you should start.

Helpful resources

Check out the Colorectal Cancer Health Center on WebMD for a risk assessment tool, the latest research and prevention news, and online support groups for people diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Go to webmd.com/colorectal-cancer.



An Anthem Company

¹ American Cancer Society website: What are the key statistics about colorectal cancer? (accessed November 2014): cancer.org.

² Fight Colorectal Cancer website: Survival Statistics (accessed November 2014): fightcolorectalcaner.org.

³ American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons website: The colon: What it is, what it does, why it is important (accessed November 2014): fascrs.org.

⁴ National Cancer Institute website: Colon and Rectal Cancer (accessed November 2014): cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/colon-and-rectal.

⁵ American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons website: Colorectal Cancer (accessed November 2014): fascrs.org.

⁶ American Cancer Society website: What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer? (accessed November 2014): cancer.org.