

COLORECTAL CANCER

What is colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer, is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. The colon is the large intestine and the rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus.



AZ Fast Fact

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most frequently diagnosed type of cancer among Arizonans.¹

Who has colorectal cancer in Arizona?

There are an estimated 2,600 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed each year. African-Americans tend to have a higher death rate from colorectal cancer.

What are the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer first develops with few, if any, symptoms. However, if symptoms are present, they may include:

- Blood in or on the stool
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- A change in bowel habits
- General, unexplained stomach discomfort
- Unexplained weight loss

- There were 2,213 new cases of colorectal cancer in Arizona in 2006 making up 9% or nearly 1 in 11 of all new cancers in Arizona.²
- There were 896 deaths in Arizona in 2008 due to colorectal cancer. It is one of the most deadly cancers in Arizona second only to lung cancer.³
- In 2008, 76% of adults aged 50 years old and over in Arizona had not had the recommended blood stool test in the past two years. Among the same group of older adults, 36% had never had a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy.⁴

What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer?

- Getting older
- Low fruit and vegetable intake
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Low-fiber, high-fat diet
- Genetics
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of physical activity
- Too much alcohol consumption

What can I do about it?

The survival rate for colon cancer when discovered in the early stages is nearly 90%. Screening includes tests that find colorectal cancer by testing the stool (feces) and tests that can find both colorectal polyps and cancer. Some polyps, or growths, can be found and removed before they turn into cancer. Beginning at age 50, men and women should begin screening for colorectal cancer. The survival rate for colorectal cancer is nearly 90% when detected in early stages.

What is Arizona doing?

Arizona participates in several programs that work to help prevent or control colorectal cancer, including:

- **Arizona Cancer Control Program: azcancercontrol.gov**
This program, part of the ADHS Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease, works to help lower the number of people in Arizona getting cancer. It also works to allow people who do get cancer to get better treatment and have a better quality of life. Through the Fit at Fifty HealthCheck Program, quality colorectal cancer screening and diagnostic services are provided to low income, uninsured and underinsured Arizonans.

Further information and resources

American Cancer Society
cancer.org

A comprehensive web-based resource for those affected by cancer, including patients, family, friends, survivors, caregivers, health information seekers, professionals, donors and volunteers.

Arizona Cancer Coalition
azcancercontrol.gov

For more information on how to get involved locally in cancer prevention and control efforts, please contact the Arizona Cancer Control Program and the Arizona Cancer Coalition at the link above.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal

An online source for credible health information, including basic information about colorectal cancer, colorectal cancer prevention and colorectal cancer research.

Arizona Health Matters
arizonahealthmatters.org

An interactive website that provides information about community health, including health indicators by county and zip code.



Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease
www.tobaccofreearizona.com