

4 steps to PREVENT COLORECTAL CANCER



Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in our country. It takes the lives of about 50,000 people each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

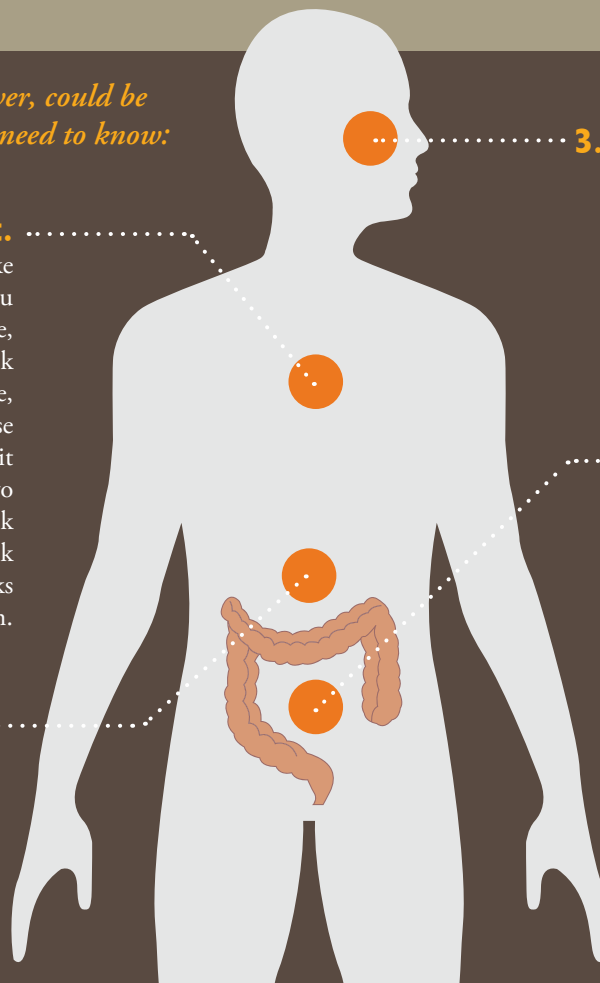
Many of these deaths, however, could be prevented. Here's what you need to know:

1. Take care of your heart.

Avoiding colorectal cancer is like getting a two-for-one deal. If you follow a heart-healthy lifestyle, you'll also be lowering your risk of colorectal cancer. Don't smoke, get regular exercise, and lose weight if you're overweight. Limit red meat to no more than two servings per week. Finally, drink no more than one alcoholic drink per day for women, or two drinks per day for men.

2. Know the symptoms.

Signs of colorectal cancer usually include blood in your stool or stomach pain that doesn't go away. See your doctor if you notice these signs.



3. Find out your family history.

If you have a close blood relative with the disease, you may be at a higher risk of getting it. Talk with your doctor about your risk.

4. Get screened.

Tests include stool blood tests that you do at home, sigmoidoscopy, and colonoscopy. Follow your doctor's advice for screening tests and how often you need them. If you are at normal risk, begin screenings at age 50 and have them up to age 75. If you have risk factors for or a family history of colon polyps or colon cancer, you may need tests sooner and more often. During a colonoscopy, polyps can be removed before they turn into cancer.

Screenings can save your life!