

FACTS ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER: **Risk Factors**

FACTS

MAINE COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CONTROL PROGRAM

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer among men and women. Treatment for colorectal cancer is most effective when the cancer is found early—indeed, if polyps are removed before they become cancerous, this is one cancer that can be prevented. So, regardless of whether your lifestyle includes any or all of these risk factors, you should **plan on getting screened for colorectal cancer regularly once you reach age 50.**

Age: Although colorectal cancer can strike at any age, more than 9 in 10 new cases are in people ages 50 and older. There are other factors, however, that can increase your risk of developing colorectal cancer:

Gender: Colorectal cancer affects both men and women.

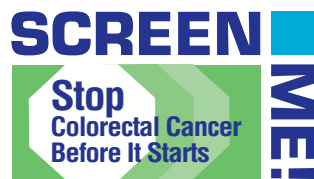
Ethnic Background/Race: Minorities, particularly African-Americans and Hispanics, are more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in advanced stages, making death rates higher for these populations.

Personal history of bowel disease: A personal history of colon cancer or intestinal polyps, and diseases such as chronic ulcerative colitis, Crohn's Disease and Inflammatory Bowel Disease increase a person's chance of developing colorectal cancer.

Family history/genetic factors: A strong family history of colorectal cancer (one or more first degree relatives) may indicate an increased risk for developing colorectal cancer.

Diet/Exercise: A high-fat diet, particularly from animal sources, can increase the risk of colorectal cancer. People who are not active have a higher risk of colorectal cancer.

Smoking/Alcohol: Recent studies show that smokers are 30%-40% more likely than non-smokers to die of colorectal cancer. Heavy use of alcohol has also been linked to colorectal cancer.



An Initiative of the
Maine Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Bureau of Health

For more information about colorectal cancer,
call **1-877-320-6800**
TTY: 1-800-438-5514 (Deaf/Hard of Hearing)
or visit www.mainepublichealth.gov.



John Elias Baldacci
Governor

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate against people on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, age or national origin in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This information is available in alternate format upon request. The Maine Comprehensive Cancer Control Program is a collaborative effort of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Centers For Disease Control and Prevention.