

# TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN COLORECTAL CANCER PREVENTION

Colorectal cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. Yet outcomes are usually positive when it's caught early. Stay ahead with preventive actions.

## REDUCE YOUR RISKS

Researchers have linked many behaviors to an increased risk of colorectal cancer, and avoiding these risk factors could lower your chances of developing colorectal polyps, the first stage of most cancer cases:

- Reach and maintain a healthy weight throughout life
- Stay physically active
- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits each day
- Choose whole grains and limit refined grain products
- Limit amounts of red meat, processed meats and sugary drinks
- Limit alcohol consumption to one drink per day for women; two per day for men
- Don't use tobacco in any form
- Discuss screenings with your health care provider

## START PREVENTION EARLY

The death rate from colorectal cancer has dropped in both men and women because of early detection. Unfortunately, recent studies show that cases among 20–50-year-olds are on the rise. Regular screenings are more critical now than ever.

## SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Consider these facts about colorectal cancer:

**Gender equal:** Colorectal cancer is equally common in women and men.

**No age discrimination:** Colorectal cancer does not just affect those ages 45 and older, even though it is more common in that age group.

**Colonoscopies are not painful:** Patients are adequately sedated and made comfortable. Most patients don't even remember the procedure. Remember, the procedure is very minimal compared to months of treatment for colon cancer.



# WHEN AM I DUE?



In general, regular screening is recommended for people starting at age 45 and continuing until age 75. Several different screening tests can be used to find polyps or colorectal cancer. They include:

## STOOL-BASED TESTS

- Fecal immunochemical test (FIT)
- Guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT)
- Multi-targeted stool DNA test (mt-sDNA)

## VISUAL EXAMS

- Colonoscopy
- Virtual colonoscopy
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy (FSIG)

Talk to your doctor about which test is right for you and how often you should be screened based on your age, overall health, prior screening history and your risk factors.



See what preventive care is recommended for your specific age and gender at [BCBSND.com/Preventive-Care](https://www.bcbsnd.com/preventive-care)

Sources: American Cancer Society, WebMD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



The monthly wellness topics are part of BlueElements—a health and wellness platform that encompasses six areas—physical, social, emotional, financial, professional and community.



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