

### What is colon cancer?

Colon cancer is cancer that forms in the longest part of the large bowel, called the colon. Tumors or growths in the colon are called polyps. Not all polyps are cancer. If colon cancer is found early, it is often curable. It is the third most common cancer in women and men.

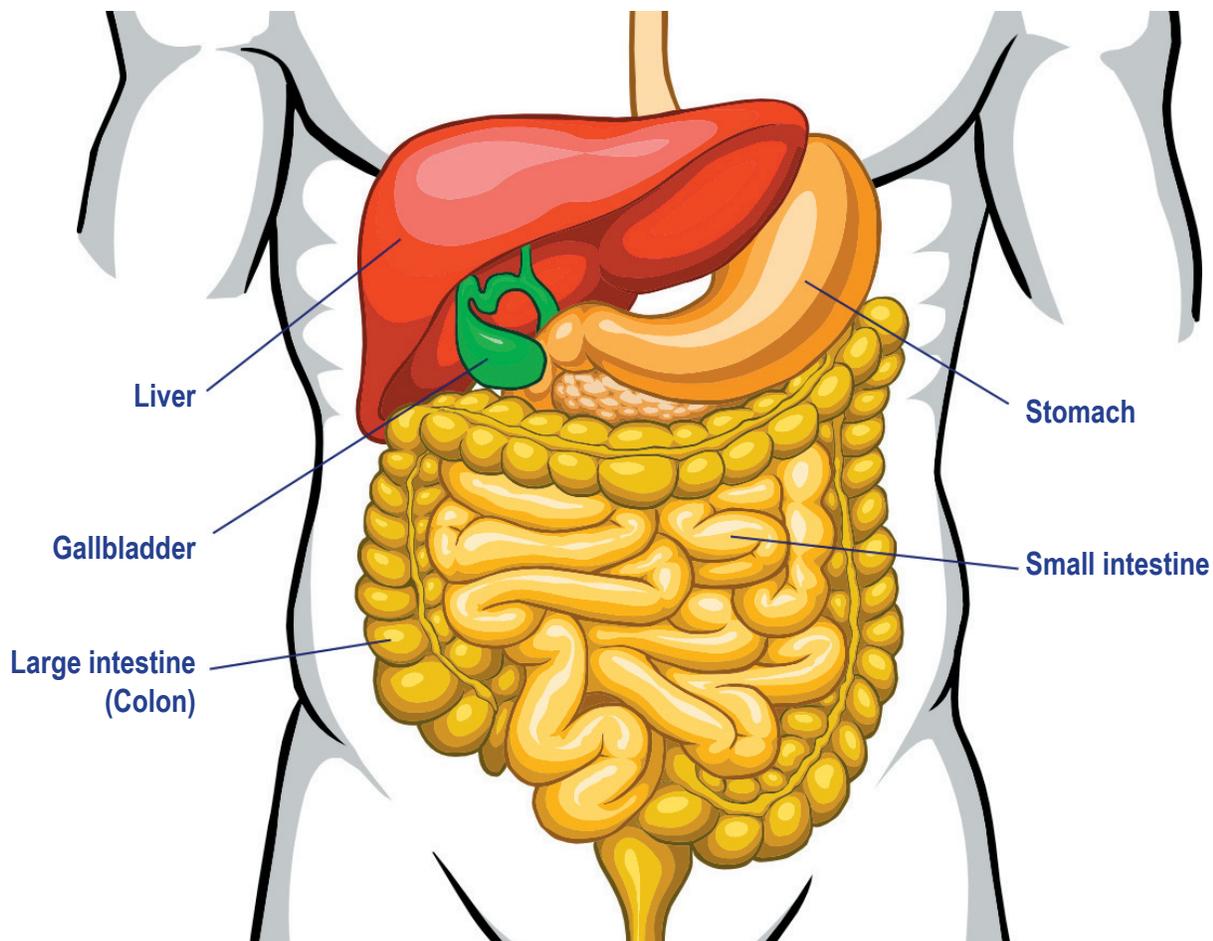
The most common sign of colon cancer is a change in normal bowel habits, however, some people do not have any symptoms. Some symptoms include:

- ◆ Diarrhea

- ◆ Constipation
- ◆ Bright red or very dark blood in your bowel movements
- ◆ Losing weight with no known cause

### What are the risk factors for colon cancer?

- ◆ Family or personal history of colon cancer
- ◆ Over 50 years old
- ◆ History of tumors in your colon



# Colon Cancer

- ◆ Diseases in your intestines
- ◆ Smoking
- ◆ High fat, low fiber diet
- ◆ Being overweight or obese
- ◆ Not getting enough exercise
- ◆ Drinking many alcoholic drinks a day

## How can I lower my risk for colon cancer?

- ◆ Talk to your doctor about getting a screening test called a colonoscopy starting at age 50. This test will find problems in the bowel. If you have polyps, they will be removed and tested for cancer. If you have a family history of colon cancer, you should start getting the test at an earlier age.
- ◆ Eat a low fat, high fiber diet. Include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and lean meats in your diet.
- ◆ Do not smoke.
- ◆ Exercise for 30 minutes a day.
- ◆ Keep a healthy weight for your height.
- ◆ Have only one drink with alcohol a day.

\*Don't wait for symptoms. Talk to your healthcare provider about your family health history. Find out what you can do to reduce your risk of disease or detect it early.\*

## For more information about colon cancer:

- ◆ The National Cancer Institute  
[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/colon-and-rectal](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/colon-and-rectal)
- ◆ National Institutes of Health  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/colorectalcaner.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/colorectalcaner.html)
- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic\\_info/](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/)