



## MSK Direct

Memorial Sloan Kettering is recognized as a world leader in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of colorectal cancer. As a comprehensive cancer center, we know that cancer care isn't just about medicine. We're also committed to caring for the community with cancer prevention, wellness, and screening education to keep you healthy and well.

NYCDCC Welfare Fund partners with MSK to offer MSK Direct, a program that provides guided access to expert clinical care as well as practical and emotional support.

## Trust Your Gut Your Guide to Preventing Colorectal Cancer

For more information, call the NYCDCC Welfare Fund dedicated MSK Direct line at **833-786-3368** or visit **[www.mskcc.org/nycdcc](http://www.mskcc.org/nycdcc)**.

### WHAT IS COLORECTAL CANCER?

The colon and rectum are both part of the large intestine, which is sometimes called the bowel. Cancers of both organs are often grouped together as colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer often grows slowly over several years. It usually starts as a small abnormal growth, called a polyp, on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. Some polyps can become cancer.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU BE SCREENED?

#### Under Age 50

- If you have any of the signs of colon cancer or any of the risk factors that you can't control listed in this pamphlet, talk with your healthcare provider about when you should get screened.
- Some healthcare providers now recommend screenings starting at age 45. Talk with your primary care provider about the right schedule for you.

#### Age 50 and Over

- Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling a colonoscopy. Everyone age 50 and over should have one.

### WHAT IS A COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING (COLONOSCOPY)?

During a colonoscopy, a doctor uses a thin, flexible tube with a light and tiny video camera at the tip of it to search for polyps inside the colon. A tool at the end of the scope can remove polyps if the doctor finds any. A colonoscopy is the only kind of screening method that can both find cancer and prevent it.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT THE DAY BEFORE YOUR COLONOSCOPY?

You will drink only clear liquids, eat no solid food, and drink medication to make you go to the bathroom. It is very important that your colon is empty for your colonoscopy.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT THE DAY OF YOUR COLONOSCOPY?

You will be asleep (sedated) during the exam and monitored during and after your colonoscopy until you are fully awake.

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure.

After your colonoscopy, ask your doctor about how often you should be screened.

### RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CONTROL



Eat **fewer** red, processed, or charred meats.

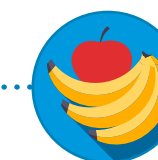


Some people who regularly use **aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** may have a **lower risk of colorectal cancer and polyps**.

You should only take aspirin under a doctor's direction as research suggests that not all people benefit.



Maintain a **healthy weight**.



Eat more **fruits and veggies**.



**Limit** sugar and fat.



**Avoid** using tobacco products.



**Cut down** on alcohol.



Get up and **move!**



Be **sun smart**.



Schedule regular **checkups**.

## RISK FACTORS YOU CAN'T CONTROL



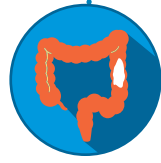
### Age

- Most colorectal cancer occurs after age 50.



### A family history of

- Lynch syndrome
- familial adenomatous polyposis
- colorectal cancer
- certain other cancers, including endometrial, ovarian, gastric, urinary tract, brain, and pancreatic



### A personal history of

- long-standing inflammatory bowel disease (eight-plus years), such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- precancerous polyps
- a previous colorectal cancer

## CENTER FOR YOUNG ONSET COLORECTAL CANCER

Real progress is being made against colorectal cancer, as more people are screened and treatment options improve. But recently there has been a troubling rise in colorectal cancer among people as young as their 20s and 30s who have no history of the disease and few if any risk factors. MSK's Center for Young Onset Colorectal Cancer is the first clinic of its kind in the world dedicated solely to the specific needs of people under 50 who have colorectal cancer.

## DID YOU KNOW?



Colorectal cancer is the **third most common cancer** diagnosed in both men and women in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately **145,000 new cases** are diagnosed in the United States each year — **16 people every hour**.<sup>1</sup>

Colorectal cancer has a **90 percent survival rate** if caught early.<sup>2</sup>



By 2030, cases of colorectal cancer in **people under 50** are expected to nearly double.<sup>3</sup>

## SYMPTOMS OF COLORECTAL CANCER

While there are often no symptoms in early stages, there are signs you should not ignore:

- rectal bleeding or blood in the stool
- changes in your bowel habits — diarrhea, constipation, narrow stool — lasting more than a few days
- a persistent urge to use the bathroom
- unexplained abdominal pain lasting more than a few days
- unintended weight loss
- unexplained fatigue
- anemia

These symptoms usually do not mean you have colorectal cancer, but you should contact your doctor if any of these problems are severe or last longer than you think they should.

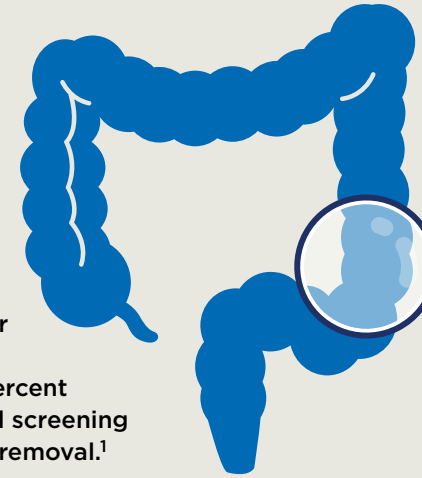
**50+**

For people **age 50 or older**, colorectal cancer diagnoses have **decreased 30 percent** due to increased screening rates and polyp removal.<sup>1</sup>

SOURCES: <sup>1</sup>American Cancer Society; <sup>2</sup>American Society of Clinical Oncology; <sup>3</sup>JAMA Surgery 2015

## OTHER SCREENING TESTS

A colonoscopy is the gold standard when it comes to colorectal cancer screening, but there are also other screening tests, such as ones that test your stool (poop). While stool tests can help find cancer, they are not as good as a colonoscopy at finding growths that can develop into cancer, such as polyps. Depending on the results of your stool test, your healthcare provider may recommend a colonoscopy.



## OUR LOCATIONS

### New York

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center  
MSK Commack  
MSK Nassau  
MSK Ralph Lauren Center  
MSK Westchester

### New Jersey

MSK Basking Ridge  
MSK Bergen  
MSK Monmouth

## CONTACT

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To schedule a colonoscopy, speak with your doctor or health plan.



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

