

# With Colorectal Cancer Rates Rising, the American Cancer Society and Colorectal Cancer Alliance Join Forces to Increase Screening

**ATLANTA, February 29, 2024** – The [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) and the [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#) (Alliance) are joining forces on [Your Colon is 45](#) - an initiative aimed at promoting colorectal cancer screening for individuals aged 45 and above. By combining their efforts, ACS and the Alliance seek to extend their outreach and enhance public awareness regarding symptoms, risk factors, and screening resources.

According to the American Cancer Society's [Cancer Fact & Figures, 2024 report](#), colorectal cancer is now the leading cause of cancer death in men and the second in women under 50 years old. Among adults age 45-49, 80% are not getting screened. This disturbing statistic and [recent data](#) that reflects more than a third of U.S. adults are overdue for colorectal cancer screening makes increasing awareness urgent and critically needed.

[Your Colon is 45](#) encourages everyone to visit [YourColonIs45.org](#) to learn more about prevention, take a screening quiz, find a screening location, and send an e-card to remind friends and loved ones to get checked. By working together to get Americans screened, ACS and the Alliance can make significant strides in helping the [Biden Cancer Moonshot](#) achieve its goal of preventing more than 4 million cancer deaths by 2047 and improve the experience of people who are touched by cancer.

"The [Your Colon is 45](#) initiative represents a significant step forward in our collective effort against colorectal cancer," said, [Dr. William Dahut](#), chief scientific officer for the American Cancer Society. "By joining forces with the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, we can reach more individuals and empower them with vital information that can save lives."

[Michael Sapienza](#), CEO of the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, echoed this sentiment, saying, "Together, we are stronger. Through collaborative efforts, we can make a profound impact on colorectal cancer prevention and early detection."

Colorectal cancer starts in the colon or the rectum. Depending on where they start, these cancers can also be called colon cancer or rectal cancer. When the first abnormal cells start to grow into polyps, it usually takes about 10 to 15 years for them to develop into colorectal cancer. With regular screening, most polyps can be found and removed before this happens. Screening can also find colorectal cancer early when it's small and easier to treat.

Matching an American Cancer Society 2018 update to colorectal cancer [screening guidelines](#), and the Alliance's call for earlier screening, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) released a recommendation statement lowering the age to begin colorectal cancer screening from age 50 to age 45 in 2021. At age 45 or older, everyone should talk to a healthcare provider about the best screening options available.

To help prevent colorectal cancer or catch it early, when it's most treatable, ACS and the Alliance recommend following these tips:

## Know the Risk Factors

More than half of colorectal cancers in the U.S. are associated with lifestyle risk factors that can be changed, including lack of exercise, excess weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, and eating a diet high in red or processed meat and low in fruits, vegetables, whole-grain fiber, and calcium. Family history of colorectal cancer, certain inherited genetic syndromes like Lynch syndrome, chronic inflammatory bowel diseases, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, and type 2 diabetes are

also risk factors. Race can be a risk factor, too. Alaska Natives have the highest rate of colorectal cancer incidence and death, while Black Americans are 35% more likely to die from colorectal cancer and 15% more likely to develop it than non-Hispanic whites.

## **Be Aware of Symptoms**

Colorectal cancer can develop silently, so there may be no symptoms until it has advanced to later, and more deadly, stages. It has a 91% survival rate when caught early, yet among those age 45-49, more than 80% are not getting screened. The faster the symptoms are recognized,

the better the chances of treatment. Symptoms to look for include a change in bowel habits, rectal bleeding, abdominal discomfort, weakness and/or fatigue, and unexplained weight loss. People experiencing these symptoms should speak with a healthcare provider immediately.

## **Get Screened**

Screening can prevent colorectal cancer through the detection and removal of precancerous growths called polyps. Screening can also detect cancer at an early stage when treatment is usually more successful. People at average risk should start screening at age 45, and those at higher risk may need to get checked earlier. There are many options for screening including at-home tests and colonoscopies, which help reduce the risk of colorectal cancer death.

Visit [YourColonIs45.org](https://YourColonIs45.org) for resources on colorectal cancer prevention, including a personalized screening quiz, a doctor locator, and an e-card to remind friends and loved ones to get screened.

# # #

## **About the American Cancer Society**

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit [cancer.org](https://cancer.org) or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](https://facebook.com/acs), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/acs), and [Instagram](https://instagram.com/acs).

## **About Colorectal Cancer Alliance**

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance empowers a nation of passionate and determined allies to prevent, treat, and overcome colorectal cancer in their lives and communities. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Alliance advocates for prevention, magnifies support, and accelerates research. We are the largest national nonprofit dedicated to colorectal cancer, and we exist to end this disease in our lifetime. For more information, visit [colorectalcancer.org](https://colorectalcancer.org).

For further information: American Cancer Society, Michele Money-Carson - [Michele.money-carson@cancer.org](mailto:Michele.money-carson@cancer.org) Colorectal Cancer Alliance, Emily Blasi - [eblasi@ccalliance.org](mailto:eblasi@ccalliance.org)

---

Additional assets available online: [Photos \(1\)](#)