

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COLORECTAL CANCER

Symptoms of colorectal cancer at the early stages are not usually present. Should you develop the disease in a later stage, the most common symptoms are:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation, or blood in the stool.
- Cramping or pain in the lower abdominal (stomach) area.
- Constant tiredness, or lack of energy.

## GET SCREENED FOR COLORECTAL CANCER

Speak to your primary care provider about your risk of developing colorectal cancer. For colorectal screenings, your provider may refer you to a McLaren Flint gastroenterology specialist. For more information, visit [karmanos.org/flintcolonoscopy](http://karmanos.org/flintcolonoscopy).

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# COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENINGS IN FLINT



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## COLORECTAL CANCER FACTS

Colorectal cancer is the most curable in its early stages. It may include cancers of the colon or rectum. Colorectal cancer is the most common cancer among men and women. This disease usually starts as a non-cancerous polyp, or growth.

## WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?

A colonoscopy is how specialists can detect possible polyps or cancer growth in the colon and rectal area. During a colonoscopy a small flexible tube with a camera at the tip is inserted into the anus. It passes through the rectum and colon to detect abnormalities. During this procedure, your physician may biopsy or remove suspicious-looking areas. Patients are sedated for this procedure.

There are other types of colorectal cancer screenings, including a fecal occult blood test (FOBT), fecal immunochemical test (FIT), stool DNA test (sDNA), and a flexible sigmoidoscopy. Speak to your health care provider to determine the best screening for you.

## SHOULD YOU BE SCREENED FOR COLORECTAL CANCER?

Generally, men and women who are considered at average risk for colon cancer should begin screenings at age 45. If you are considered high risk, you may be encouraged to begin screening at an earlier age.

Men and women who are considered high risk for colon cancers are encouraged to speak with their physician about receiving a colonoscopy. Those who are at a high risk usually:

- Are African American. African Americans are recommended to begin screening at an earlier age.
- Have had colorectal cancer before.
- Have a history of ovarian, uterine or breast cancer.



- Have a family history of colorectal cancer or other genetic factors (e.g. Lynch syndrome, or familial polyposis).
- Have a personal history of colorectal polyps.
- Have Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), also known as Crohn's disease or Colitis.
- Are obese and/or are physically inactive.
- Are regular tobacco or alcohol users.
- Have a diet that is high in fat or high in red or processed meat and low in fiber, calcium, fruit and vegetables.
- Have Type 2 diabetes.

If you fall between these guidelines and the results of your first screening are normal, physicians recommend receiving a colonoscopy every 10 years.

## IS COLORECTAL CANCER PREVENTABLE?

Avoiding some of the high-risk factors listed above can help in preventing colorectal cancer, but screening can help with prevention, as well. Non-cancerous polyps may turn into cancer. When polyps are found during a colonoscopy, in most cases they can be removed before cancer is developed.