

About colorectal cancer

The colon and rectum make up the large intestine, which is part of the digestive system. Colorectal cancer (or bowel cancer) is a disease of the colon or rectum.¹

Most colorectal cancers start as a polyp, a growth on the inner lining of the colon or rectum.¹ Some types of polyps can change into cancer over time (usually many years).¹

About **66%** of new colorectal cancers arise in the colon.²



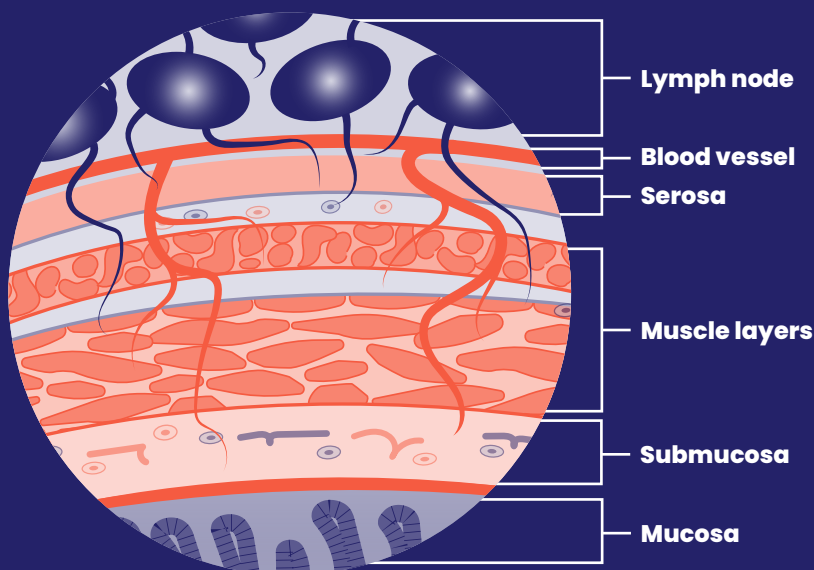
Around **30%** occur in the rectum.²

What is metastatic colorectal cancer (mCRC)?¹

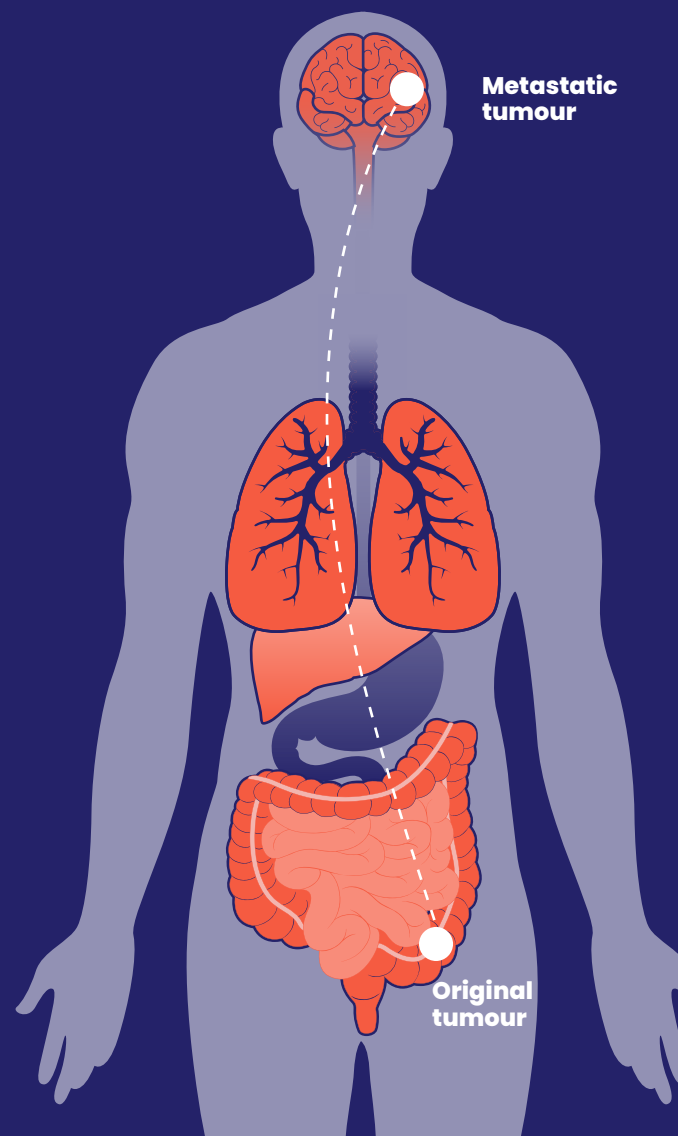
When the cancer cells spread beyond the area where they started to develop, the colorectal cancer is called metastatic (stage IV) disease.

If cancer forms in a polyp, it can grow into the wall of the colon or rectum.

The wall of the colon and rectum is made up of many layers. Colorectal cancer starts in the innermost layer (the mucosa) and can grow outwards. When cancer cells are in the wall, they can then grow into blood or lymph vessels and from there, travel to nearby lymph nodes or to distant parts of the body.



The stage (extent of spread) of colorectal cancer depends on how deeply it grows into the wall and if it has spread outside the colon or rectum.



What are the symptoms?³

DID YOU KNOW?

Colorectal cancer doesn't always cause symptoms, especially at first, meaning many people might have it without knowing



A change in bowel habits



Blood in stool



Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty all the way



Abdominal pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away



Rapid weight loss without knowledge of why or without specific diet

How common is colorectal cancer?

3rd

most common cancer worldwide, **second** among women and **third** among men⁴

On average, **nearly**

1.4m

people are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year globally⁵

More than

1.9m

new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed in 2020⁴

Approximately

10%

of global **cancer** cases are colorectal cancer⁵

Around

22%

of colorectal cancer cases are metastatic at initial diagnosis⁶

Approximately

70%

of colorectal cancer patients will eventually develop metastatic relapse⁶

>70%

increase in global colorectal cancer cases forecast between 2018 and 2040, rising to **over 3 million** cases annually⁷

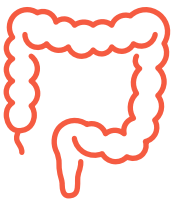


What are the risk factors?

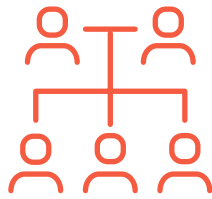
Genetic and lifestyle risk factors may increase the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer.⁸

While increasing age is the greatest risk factor for developing colorectal cancer,² with **most cases occurring in people 45 years and older**, the disease is increasingly affecting younger people.³

Inherited (genetic) risk factors:^{3,8,9}



Inflammatory bowel disease
e.g., Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis



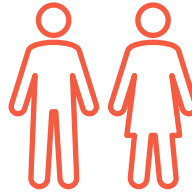
A personal or family history
of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps



A genetic syndrome e.g., Lynch syndrome (hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer)



Race e.g., black/African people and Ashkenazi Jews

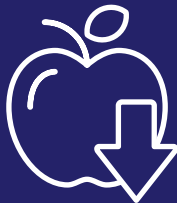


Gender – men have a slightly higher risk of developing colorectal cancer than women

Lifestyle or environmental factors:⁸



A lack of regular physical activity



A diet low in fruit or vegetables



A low fibre and high-fat diet, or a diet high in processed meats



Being overweight or obese



Alcohol consumption



Tobacco use

DID YOU KNOW?

The increasing adoption of 'western' lifestyles appears to be driving a rise in the number of colorectal cancer cases in low- and middle-income countries⁷

How long do people survive colorectal cancer?



2nd

leading cause of cancer mortality globally⁷



Around
881,000
deaths worldwide
in 2018⁷



>80%

increase in global deaths from colorectal cancer forecast between 2018 and 2040, rising to **approximately 1.6 million** per year⁷



11%

survival rate after 5-years for mCRC patients¹⁰



30

months Overall Survival for mCRC patients, on average^{7,11}

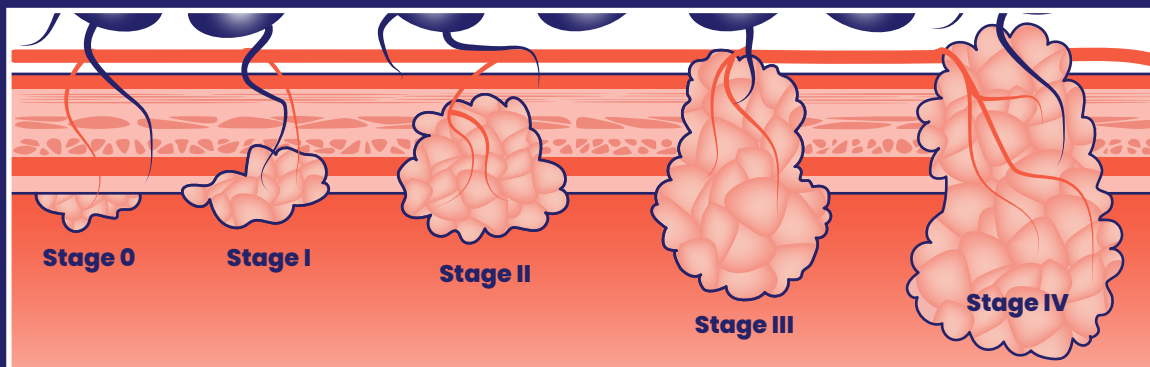


4-8

median Overall Survival for patients with refractory mCRC⁷

How is colorectal cancer treated?¹²

The treatment of colorectal cancer depends on the **location of the cancer** (colon or rectum), and is largely based on the **stage of the cancer** (whether it has spread anywhere else in the body).



From Stage IV, the cancer then can spread to other organs.

Other factors such as the patient's **overall health** can also be important.

In specific cases, and when colorectal cancer is detected early, it can be removed by **surgery**. At later stages of disease, **chemotherapy**, **targeted treatments**, and **immunotherapies** might be used.

References

1. Cancer.org. What Is Colorectal Cancer? Available at: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/what-is-colorectal-cancer.html> Last accessed: January 2023
2. BMJ Best Practice, Colorectal Cancer. Available at: <https://bestpractice.bmj.com/topics/en-gb/258> Last accessed: January 2023
3. Colorectal Cancer Alliance, What Is Colorectal Cancer? Available at: <https://www.ccalliance.org/colorectal-cancer-information/what-is-colorectal-cancer> Last accessed: January 2023
4. World Cancer Research Fund International, Colorectal Cancer Statistics. Available at: <https://www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/colorectal-cancer-statistics/> Last accessed: January 2023
5. Digestive Cancers Europe. Prevalence of Colorectal Cancer. Available at: https://digestivecancers.eu/colorectal-cancer/prevalence-of-colorectal-cancer-prevalence/?menu_id=13873 Last accessed: January 2023
6. Wang J., Li S., Liu Y., et al. Metastatic patterns and survival outcomes in patients with stage IV colon cancer: A population-based analysis. *Cancer Med.* 2020. 9(1): 361–373
7. Tabernero J., Taieb J., Prager G., et al. Trifluridine/tipiracil plus bevacizumab for third-line management of metastatic colorectal cancer: SUNLIGHT study design. *Future Oncol.* 2021.17(16): 1977–1985
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Are The Risk Factors For Colorectal Cancer? Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/risk_factors.htm. Last accessed: January 2023
9. Cancer.net. Colorectal Cancer: Risk Factors and Prevention. Available at: <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/colorectal-cancer/risk-factors-and-prevention> Last accessed: January 2023
10. World Health Organisation. GLOBOCAN. Cancer today. Estimated age-standardized incidence rates (World) in 2018, all cancers, both sexes, all ages. Available at: https://gco.iarc.fr/today/online-analysis-map?v=2018&mode=population&mode_population=continents&population=900&populations=900&key=asr&sex=0&cancer=39&type=0&statistic=5&prevalence=0&population_group=0&ages_group%5B%5D=0&ages_group%5B%5D=17&nb_items=10&group_cancer=1&include_nmsc=1&include_nmsc_other=1&projection=natural-earth&color_palette=default&map_scale=quantile&map_nb_colors=5&continent=0&rotate=%255B10%252C0%255D Last accessed: January 2023
11. De Falco V, Napolitano S, Roselló S, Huerta M, Cervantes A, Ciardiello F, Troiani T. How we treat metastatic colorectal cancer. *ESMO Open.* 2020 Aug;4(Suppl 2):e000813. doi: 10.1136/esmoopen-2020-000813. PMID: 32817137; PMCID: PMC7451280
12. Cancer.org. Treating colorectal cancer. Available at: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/treating.html> Last accessed: January 2023