

## How can I get more information?

### For general questions about screening for colorectal cancer:

Speak to your family doctor

Visit the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada website: [www.colorectal-cancer.ca](http://www.colorectal-cancer.ca)

### For questions about MSI testing or Lynch syndrome:

Call the Hereditary Cancer Program  
604.877.6000, local 672325

Visit the Hereditary Cancer Program website  
[www.bccancer.bc.ca/hereditarycancer](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/hereditarycancer)

MSI testing information for physicians:  
[www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/CancerManagementGuidelines/PathologyRequestForms.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/CancerManagementGuidelines/PathologyRequestForms.htm)  
604.877.6000, local 672084 or 672149

### For general information about cancer:

Visit the BC Cancer Agency website  
[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)

Visit the Canadian Cancer Society website  
[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

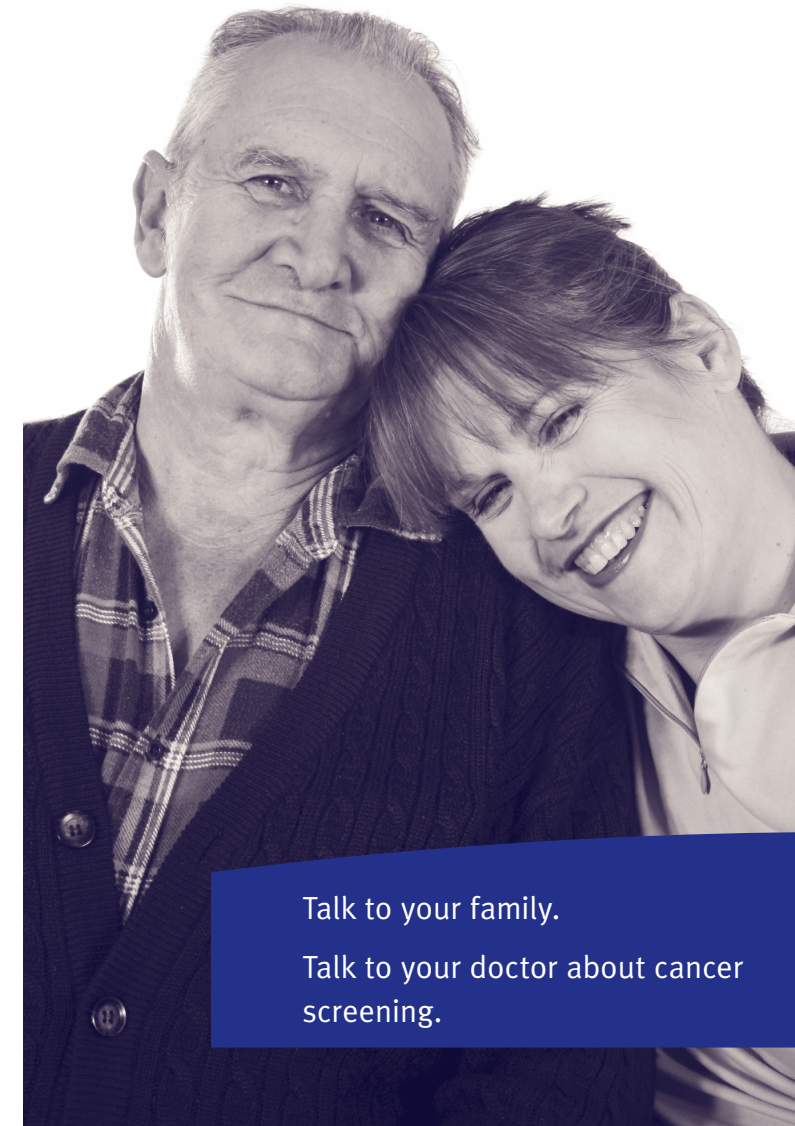
Call the Canadian Cancer Society's Cancer Information Service  
1.888.939.3333

Talk to your doctor about colorectal cancer screening.

Screening saves lives.



Has anyone in your family had colon cancer?



Talk to your family.  
Talk to your doctor about cancer screening.

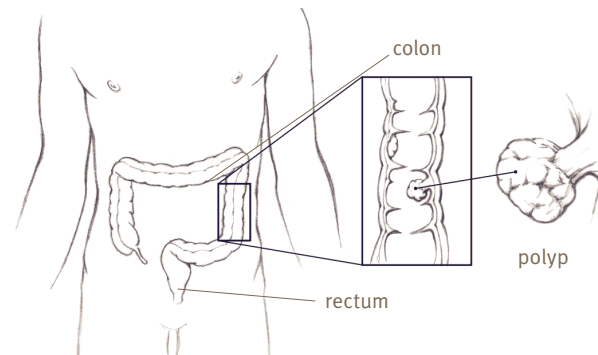


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Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4E6  
604.877.6000  
1.800.663.3333 (in BC)  
[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)



## What is colorectal cancer?

The colon and rectum make up the large intestine, which is sometimes called the bowel. Colorectal cancer develops from abnormal growths, called polyps, in the colon or rectum. If undiscovered and untreated, some polyps can become cancerous. This is a serious health risk to the large intestine and can even spread to other organs.



### Talk to your doctor about screening tests.

Screening can save lives by finding colorectal cancer at its earliest stage, or by finding polyps that can be removed before they turn into cancer. For most people, screening for early signs of colorectal cancer needs only a simple test, done at home, to check for blood in the stool. If any of your close relatives had colorectal cancer, your screening may include a colonoscopy. Colonoscopy is a test that allows a specialist to look inside the colon and rectum for early signs of cancer.

### Close relatives of a person with colorectal cancer may have a higher risk.

If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, try to find out:

- The name of each family member who has had cancer
- The type of cancer they had
- How old they were when they had cancer
- Where they lived when they had cancer
- How they are related to you

### If 1 person in your family had colorectal cancer before age 50, there is a small chance they have Lynch syndrome.

You may wish to share this pamphlet with any close relatives who had colorectal cancer at a young age. This information will help them to discuss Lynch syndrome with their doctors.

### What is Lynch syndrome?

Lynch syndrome, also called HNPCC (hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer) is the most common form of hereditary colorectal cancer. If one person in a family has Lynch syndrome, their close relatives may also have it. Close relatives include: children, brothers and sisters, parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents from the same side of the family. But please remember that hereditary cancer is rare.

### What is MSI testing?

MSI = microsatellite instability. MSI testing is done on a sample of colorectal cancer tissue to look for clues that the cancer was caused by Lynch syndrome.

### Who can have MSI testing?

Men and women who had colorectal cancer before the age of 50, and who had tumour tissue removed during surgery in British Columbia. Tumour tissue is kept in laboratories for many years. Even if the surgery was 10 years ago, MSI testing may still be possible. Most Canadian provinces offer a similar service.

### How do I arrange an MSI test?

MSI testing of tumour tissue is ordered by a doctor. Ideally, MSI testing is arranged for a person who had colorectal cancer before age 50, by their own doctor. After a person has died, it may still be possible to do MSI testing of their tumour. Talk to your doctor if you are interested in this testing for yourself or your family.

### What are the results of MSI testing?

Most tests do not find MSI, which means that Lynch syndrome is unlikely. This can be good news for a family.

If the test does find MSI, it is a clue that the person may have Lynch syndrome. But not all MSI is caused by Lynch syndrome. Referral to the Hereditary Cancer Program is suggested to learn more, and to discuss other tests that may be helpful.

### If one side of your family includes several close relatives with the following kinds of cancer, Lynch syndrome is also possible.

- Colorectal cancer
- Cancer of the uterus (endometrium)
- Cancer of the ovaries
- Other cancers of the digestive system e.g. stomach, small bowel, pancreas, biliary tract
- Cancer of the urinary tract

It may be important to have special screening for colorectal cancer if you have close relatives with 1 or more of the cancers listed above, especially if their cancer was diagnosed before age 50. Talk to your doctor about your family history of cancer. A referral to the Hereditary Cancer Program may help members of your family to get the right cancer screening.

