

COLORECTAL CANCER

Signs and Symptoms

People with early-stage colorectal cancer are typically asymptomatic. This is why regular screening is essential!

Signs and Symptoms to Look For

- Rectal bleeding with bright red blood
- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation, or narrow stools, that lasts for more than a few days
- A feeling that you need to have a bowel movement that's not relieved by having one
- Blood in the stool, which might make the stool look dark brown or black
- Cramping or abdominal pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss



Many of these symptoms can be caused by conditions other than colorectal cancer. Keeping a record of changes over time can be helpful. **Remember, you know your body best. If something doesn't feel right, speak up.**

Tracking Symptoms and Advocating for Your Health

Keep a health journal: Record any new symptoms, including frequency, duration, and patterns. This can be a helpful tool for your doctor.

Know your family history: Share your family history of colorectal cancer with your doctor. This is important for creating a personalized screening plan, especially if you're at higher risk.

Ask about screening: Screening saves lives. If you're 45 or older, have a family history of colorectal cancer, or have other risk factors, talk to your doctor about screening options. Even if you're younger and experiencing symptoms, it's okay to push for a screening referral if you feel it's needed.

Speak up if symptoms persist: Don't ignore symptoms that stick around or get worse. Persistent symptoms deserve attention, especially if they're new or worsening.

Anyone can get colorectal cancer. Know the signs and symptoms, stay proactive about your health, and follow recommended screening guidelines.

Sources: American Cancer Society and Cheeky Charity, 2025