

# PATIENT LETTER—INCREASED RISK

## Your risk for colorectal cancer:

You are at **increased risk** for colorectal cancer based on the family and personal medical information that you provided. No tool for detecting risk is perfect and only a health care provider can tell for sure. **Talk to a health care provider about your risk and colorectal cancer screening.**

### What is Colorectal Cancer?

People can develop colorectal cancer, a disease in which cancer cells form in the tissues of the colon or rectum. Colorectal cancer can be fatal. The colon is part of the body's digestive system which absorbs nutrients (vitamins, minerals, sugars, fats, proteins, and water) from foods and helps pass waste material out of the body. The first 6 feet of the large intestine are called the colon or large bowel. The last 6 inches are the rectum and the anal canal. Early detection of colorectal cancer saves lives.

### Risk Factors

Having a risk factor does not mean that you will get cancer. Risks include:

- a family history of colorectal cancer in a relative before age 50
- a family history that suggests several relatives have had colorectal, endometrial (uterine), or other cancers
- a family history of a relative with more than one type of cancer

### Next Steps

**Please talk to a health care provider about your risk!**

Colorectal cancer screening tests are usually recommended for people aged 50 or older. Screening tests can include: a home stool test kit, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy. People with **increased risk** for colorectal cancer may need screening more frequently and at earlier ages using colonoscopy.

*“Signs of colorectal cancer can include blood in your stool or changes in your bowel habits.”*

Colorectal cancer screening can help detect problems early when they are most treatable.

**For more information, call 1-800-4-CANCER or visit:**  
<http://www.cancer.gov/types/colorectal>

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