

# March is national colorectal cancer awareness month.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER

- ▶ Colorectal cancer describes cancers that develop in the colon or rectum.
- ▶ Typically, colorectal cancers develop slowly. Many times this cancer begins as a noncancerous polyp (a growth of tissue on the colon or rectum's lining) which can change into cancer over a period of several years. It is important to note that not all polyps are precancerous growths.
- ▶ According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), in the United States colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in men after skin, prostate and lung cancer.
- ▶ According to the NCI, in the United States colorectal cancer is also the fourth most common cancer in women after skin, lung and breast cancer.

## RISK FACTORS

- ▶ Most colorectal cancers begin as precancerous polyps.
- ▶ Although colorectal cancer can occur at any age, most new cases occur after age 50.
- ▶ Men have a slightly greater risk of developing the disease.
- ▶ A personal history of bowel disease can increase a person's risk.
- ▶ Family history can increase the risk of the disease.
- ▶ Certain lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity and eating red meat may also increase the risk of developing the disease.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Blood in the stool
- ▶ Change in bowel habits
- ▶ Diarrhea, constipation, vomiting
- ▶ Abdominal discomfort such as gas, bloating, fullness and cramps
- ▶ Constant tiredness
- ▶ Narrower than normal stools
- ▶ Unexplained anemia
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Colorectal cancers are typically treated with surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. Depending on the severity of the cancer, more than one treatment may be required.

RMCC currently offers approximately 10 clinical trials for colorectal cancer. For more information on these trials, visit RMCC's Web site at [coloradocancercenters.com](http://coloradocancercenters.com).

RMCC is Colorado's largest and most comprehensive provider of cancer care with more than 50 physicians and locations throughout the state. RMCC physicians are actively involved in leading research with access to more than 70 nationwide clinical trials encompassing all types of cancer. From the Rocky Mountain region's largest bone marrow transplant program to the latest in radiation technology, RMCC provides the most advanced care for all types of cancers and hematological diseases.

## LOCATIONS

Aurora • Boulder  
Colorado Springs  
Denver • Lakewood  
Littleton • Lone Tree  
Longmont • Parker  
Pueblo • Rose  
Thornton • Vail

