



MYTHBUSTERS

Colorectal Cancer is Fatal

False! Colorectal cancer is curable if detected at an early stage. It can be detected early if screening is timely. Statistically, more than 90% of patients with localized colorectal cancer (when the disease is confined to the colon or the rectum and has not spread to other organs) are alive 5 years post diagnosis.

I Don't Need Screening I Don't Have Symptoms

It's a chicken and egg here! There are no specific symptoms for early-stage colorectal cancer, when the disease is localized and easier to treat. Screening is the only way to identify a person with the disease who may not display any symptoms. High-risk individuals are those with:

- A family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps
- A personal or family history of ovarian, endometrial, or breast cancer
- Personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- Those who display symptoms such as rectal bleeding

Colorectal Cancer Affects All Genders, Races, and Age Groups

True! Colorectal cancer equally affects both men and women. Minority populations, especially African Americans, are disproportionately affected by this disease—they are 20% more likely to get colorectal cancer compared to other groups. There is also a growing concern in the community because early-age onset colorectal cancer has seen a steep rise in recent years.

My Insurance Will Not Cover My Screening Test

False! Medicare is required to cover colorectal cancer screening tests free of cost for the individual. Private health insurance plans are required by law to cover colorectal cancer screening as a preventive care service, without any cost-sharing for the individual.

In the first half of 2020:

- 12.5% of adults were uninsured
- 9.5% were insured but faced a coverage gap in the previous year
- 21.3% were underinsured

The COVID-19 Pandemic Reduced Elective Screening **Does this go under Education?**

Additionally, those who needed a follow-up colonoscopy to confirm findings from an abnormal fecal immunochemical test (FIT) test could not come in to receive those, which further delayed diagnosis among these high-risk patients.

The [American Cancer Society](#) confirmed a 90% drop in colonoscopies due to the pandemic by April 2020, compared to two months earlier.