

PREVENT COLON CANCER

- Eat 5 or more servings of a variety of vegetables and fruits daily.
- Choose whole grains rather than processed (refined) grains.
- Limit your intake of processed meats and red meats.
- Choose foods and beverages in amounts that help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Do at least 30 minutes of moderate or rigorous physical activity every day. Increasing to 45 minutes may lower risk even more.
- If you are overweight, ask your Doctor or Dietician about a weight-loss plan that will work for you.



IMPORTANT:

If you have symptoms that don't improve within a few weeks, or if your symptoms are getting worse, it's important that you are referred to a specialist for tests to find out what the problem is.

COLON CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME

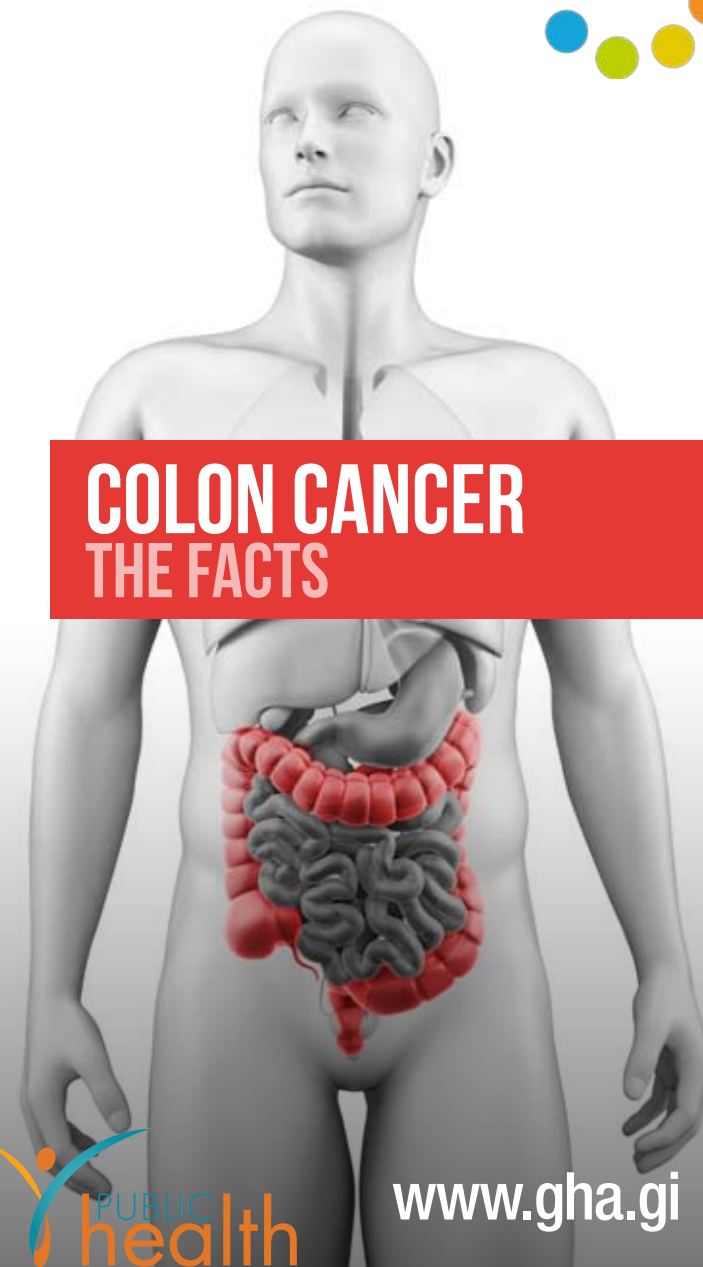
FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COLON CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME

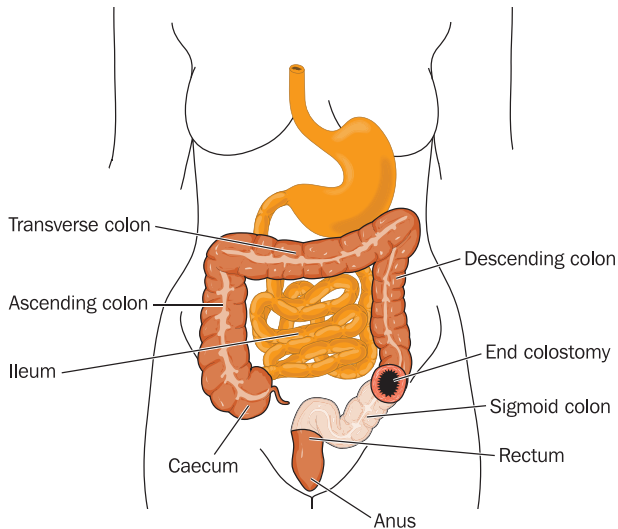


COLON CANCER THE FACTS

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WHAT DOES THE COLON DO?

The colon is part of our digestive system. The colon is also called the large intestine or the large bowel and is the last part of the digestive system just before the rectum and the anus. Food passes from the stomach to the small bowel and after the nutrients are absorbed, any undigested food passes through the colon, where water is removed from the waste matter. This waste matter is held in the rectum until it leaves the body as motions (also known as stools or faeces) through the anus.



WHAT IS COLON CANCER?

- Cancer arising in the lower part of the digestive system (all the parts shown in colour in the diagram) is known as colon cancer.
- The lining of the colon and rectum is made of cells that are constantly being renewed. Sometimes these cells grow too quickly, forming a lump of cells known as a polyp (also known as an adenoma).
- Polyps are not cancers, but they can change into a cancer over a number of years.

- Polyps are not cancers, but they can change into a cancer over a number of years.
- When a cancer occurs, its cells have the ability to spread beyond the original site and into other parts of the body and eventually cause death.
- About one in 20 people will develop colorectal cancer during their lifetime.
- It is the most common cancer in Gibraltar, and the third leading cause of cancer deaths, with about 10 persons dying from it each year.
- Regular colon cancer screening has been shown in research to reduce the risk of dying from colorectal cancer by 16%.

WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING COLON CANCER?

- Colon cancer is a disease of middle age and later. Both men and women are at risk of developing the disease although rectal cancer is more common in men.
- People with a family history of colorectal cancer have an increased risk of developing the disease.
- People who are overweight, take little exercise, and have a diet high in red meat and low in vegetables; fruits and fibre have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer.
- People who have a high consumption of alcohol.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COLON CANCER?

The symptoms of colon cancer may include any of the following:

- blood in, or on, the stools– the blood may be bright red or dark in colour
- a change in your normal bowel habit (such as diarrhoea or constipation) for no obvious reason, lasting for longer than six weeks
- unexplained weight loss
- pain in the tummy (abdomen) or back passage
- a feeling of not having emptied your bowel properly after a motion.
- Sometimes tiredness (fatigue) is a symptom of colon cancer. This can happen if the cancer has been bleeding so the number of red blood cells is reduced (anaemia). Anaemia may also make you feel breathless.
- Cancer that has been growing for a while can also cause a blockage in the bowel. The symptoms of this are: continuous constipation, increasing feeling of fullness, bloating, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Many of these these symptoms can be caused by conditions other than cancer of the colon such as haemorrhoids (piles), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or ulcerative colitis, so it is important to always have them checked by your doctor.

Screening for Colon Cancer saves lives. If you are aged between 60-74 years, the GHA will periodically invite you to do a simple test at home to detect Colon Cancer.

Don't ignore this invitation!