

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in Canada. It starts in the cells that line the colon or rectum. Colorectal cancer is 90% treatable when it's caught early, so screening is important.<sup>3</sup> People aged 50-74 should be screened every two years by taking a stool test (a sample of your feces is examined), as provided by a doctor.<sup>4</sup>

Symptoms of colorectal cancer include<sup>5</sup>:

- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Blood in the stool
- Gas, cramps or bloating
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss

Colorectal cancer is often diagnosed after age 50 and is more common in men than women. Risk factors include:

- Genetics and family history
- Having polyps
- Low levels of physical activity
- Eating a lot of red or processed meat
- Overweight or obesity
- Drinking alcohol
- Smoking
- Having a low fibre diet<sup>6</sup>

### HERE IS SOME ADVICE TO HELP REDUCE COLORECTAL CANCER RISK:<sup>11</sup>

- Follow cancer screening guidelines
- Use the plate model to build nutritious meals
- Enjoy 2-3 servings of dairy products daily. One serving is a cup of milk or yogurt, or 1.5 ounces of cheese
- Enjoy fibre-rich foods such as vegetables, fruit, beans, grains and nuts. Aim for 25-35 grams of fibre per day
- Be physically active. Aim for at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more
- Limit red and processed meat to no more than 3 portions per week. That's 350-500 grams (12-18 ounces) cooked weight
- If you don't drink alcohol, don't start. If you do drink, limit alcohol to one drink for women and two drinks for men per day

References available at:  
[milk.org/Health-and-Nutrition/Health-Care-Professionals](http://milk.org/Health-and-Nutrition/Health-Care-Professionals)

# MILK AND COLORECTAL CANCER:

## What's the connection?

About 24,000 Canadians are diagnosed with colorectal cancer annually, representing 10% of all new cancer cases.<sup>1</sup> The good news? Colorectal is one of the most preventable types of cancer.

A balanced diet, paired with physical activity, can prevent almost half of all colorectal cancer cases.<sup>2</sup> Start by choosing a dietary pattern that's high in fibre, calcium, and dairy products.



For more information, visit [milk.org](http://milk.org).

# STEPS TO DECREASE YOUR RISK OF COLORECTAL CANCER:

Dairy foods are protective against colorectal cancer. Studies from the American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund say there is “strong probable evidence” that dairy products decrease the risk of colorectal cancer.<sup>7</sup> In their definition, “dairy” includes total dairy, milk, and cheese.

This beneficial effect on colorectal cancer prevention is likely due to the calcium, vitamin D, and probiotics that are found in dairy.<sup>8</sup> Aim for 2-3 servings of dairy products per day. One serving is equal to:

- One cup of milk
- One cup of yogurt
- One cup of kefir
- 1.5 ounces of cheese



High fibre diets can help prevent colorectal cancer.<sup>9</sup> Aim for 25-35 grams of fibre per day. Fibre is found in plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes.<sup>10</sup>

Create healthy, fibre-rich meals by following these guidelines:

Filling a quarter of the meal with protein rich foods, such as milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, legumes, fish or poultry



Filling half the meal with vegetables and fruit. These can be fresh, frozen, canned, raw or cooked

Fill a quarter of the meal with whole grains, such as oats, barley, brown rice or whole wheat.

There's also evidence that cutting back on alcohol, red meat and processed meat can help reduce colorectal cancer risk.

- Limit red meat, such as beef and lamb to 350-500 grams (12-18 ounces) cooked weight per week
- Avoid processed meat (bacon, hotdogs, deli meat, ham, etc.) except for special occasions
- Limit alcohol to no more than two drinks daily for men; or one drink for women

One drink is:



150 mL wine



350 mL beer



45 mL liquor