

Introducing the Series: “Understanding Native American Cancer Data in Arizona”

First Series Topic: Colorectal Cancer

You may be seeing a considerable amount of information about colorectal cancer, here is why:

Top 4 Cancer Sites for All Cancers for Native American Males*		Top 4 Cancer Sites for All Cancers for Native American Females*	
1	Liver/Intrahepatic Bile Duct	1	Breast
2	Prostate	2	Liver/Intrahepatic Bile Duct
3	Colorectal	3	Colorectal
4	Pancreas	4	Pancreas

**Data sourced from the Arizona Cancer Registry’s mortality data trends in Arizona’s Native American population from 2016-2020.*

The **third leading cause of cancer-related death** in both Native American males and females is **colorectal cancer**. Between 2016-2020, an average 57.3% of Arizona Native Americans’ new cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed in the late stage. **Native people are often diagnosed with colorectal cancer in its later and more fatal stages** when symptoms are more obvious. Colorectal cancer **can be caught earlier** if screening efforts were to increase.

What exactly is colorectal cancer?

Where are the colon and rectum located?

- The colon and rectum make up the large intestine (or the large bowel), which is part of the digestive system, also called the gastrointestinal system (see *illustration to the right*).

Did you know?

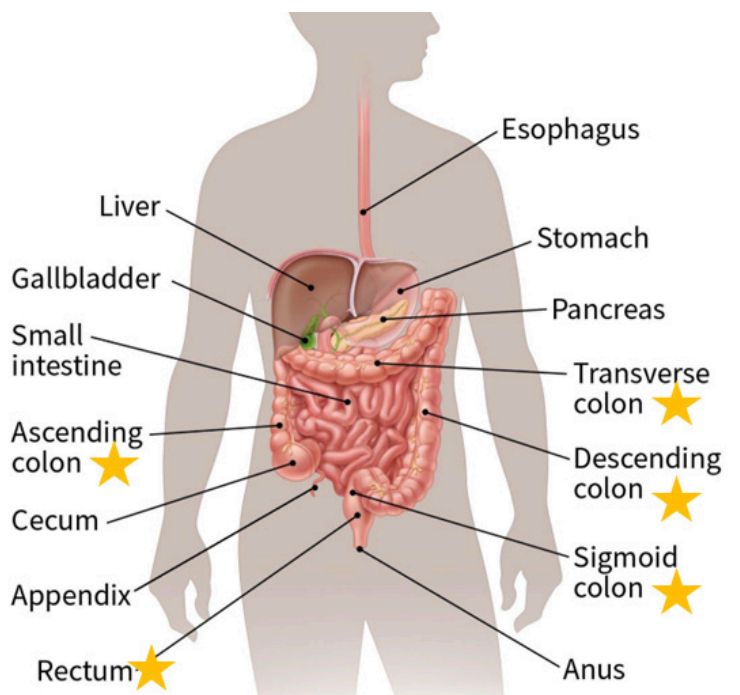
**Colorectal
=
colon + rectum**

What is colorectal cancer?

- A disease in the large intestine (colon) and rectum.
- Most colon cancers start as small noncancerous clumps of cells called *polyps*, which are a growth on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. Without treatment, polyps may turn cancerous.

For a more detailed overview:

Watch this video!



What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer?

Modifiable
(risk factors you can change)

- Being overweight or obese
- Not being physically active
- Certain types of diets
- Commercial tobacco use
- Alcohol use



Unmodifiable
(risk factors you cannot change)

- Being older
- A personal history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer
- A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- A family history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps
- Having an inherited syndrome
- Your racial and ethnic background
- Having type 2 diabetes



What is a risk factor?

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of getting a disease such as cancer.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Change in bowel movements
- Frequent bloating or abdominal pain, such as cramps, gas or pain
- Feeling the need to have a bowel movement, even though you had one recently
- Weakness or fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Rectal bleeding or blood in the stool



What are the screening recommendations?

- Colorectal cancer screening for Native Americans is recommended for those **ages 45-75**.
- People at **increased or high risk** of colorectal cancer might need to start colorectal cancer screening **before age 45**, be screened more often, and/or get specific tests.

What is a screening?

A screening is a test, examination, or procedure used to find cancer in people who have no symptoms.

All that in mind...

Regular screenings are important because most individuals with early-stage colorectal cancer do not experience any signs or symptoms and screening can help rule out cancer or other issues or simply prevent the cancer from spreading.

It is natural to feel scared or anxious about cancer screenings, but it is also beneficial to learn more about it and to be proactive about your health.

***Your health is sacred.
Please get yourself screened and encourage your relatives to get screened too!***