

Colon and Rectum Cancer in West Virginia

Colon and rectum cancer (or colorectal cancer) is a cancer that develops in the large intestine and rectum, both components of the lower Gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Most colorectal cancers start as polyps, or growths that form on the inner lining of the colon and rectum. Pre-cancerous polyps are usually adenomatous polyps, or adenomas.¹

Screening tests can find these polyps before they develop into cancer.² All men and women between the ages of 45 and 75 should receive regular colorectal cancer screenings. There are two primary types of screening: stool-based tests and direct visualization tests.³ Many patients prefer the stool-based tests because they can be performed at home and are less invasive than a typical colonoscopy. However, these tests do need to be performed more frequently, and if an abnormality is found, a colonoscopy will be needed. Visual (or structural) exams are tests that examine the inside of the colon for polyps or other abnormalities. These tests require some preparation prior to the procedure (such as drug or dietary restrictions) and present some risks that are not found in stool-based tests. However, visual exams can be performed less frequently than the stool-based tests.³

The current screening types and guidelines are shown below⁴:

Test Type	Screening Method	Frequency
Stool-based Tests	Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)	Every Year
	Guaiac Fecal Occult Blood Test (gFOBT)	Every Year
	Multi-Targeted Stool DNA Test (mt-sDNA)	Every 3 years
Direct Visualization Tests	Colonoscopy	Every 10 years
	CT Colonography	Every 5 years
	Flexible Sigmoidoscopy	Every 5 years
	Flexible Sigmoidoscopy with FIT	Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 10 years + FIT every year

Between 2015-2019, 1,129 West Virginia men and women were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, while 435 died from the disease on average every year. More than half (53%) of the colorectal cancer cases diagnosed during this time were diagnosed as late-stage.⁵

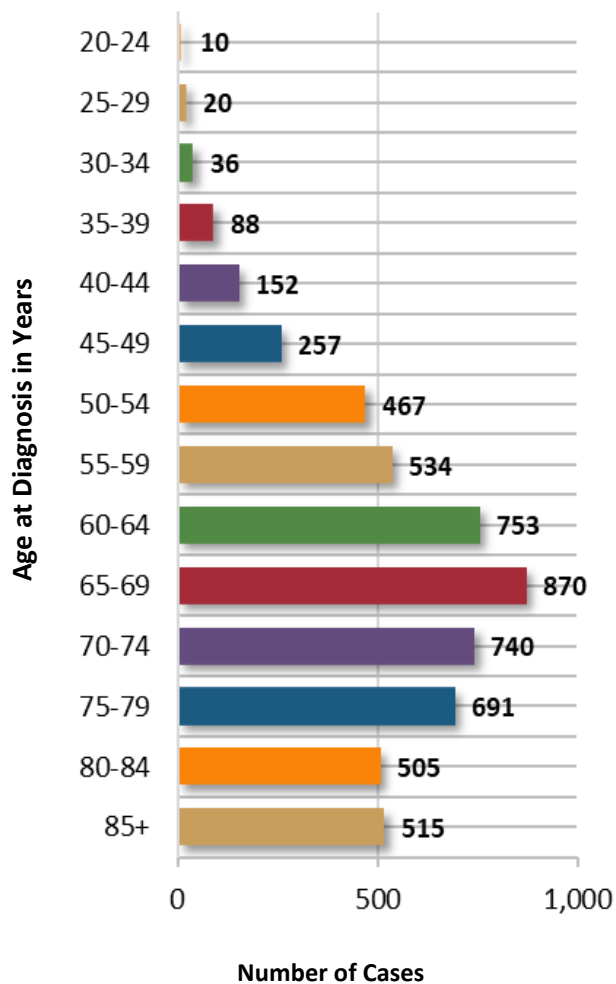
Men and women are equally likely to be diagnosed with or die of colorectal cancer in the United States and West Virginia.⁶ Most (more than 90%) of colorectal cancer diagnoses made in WV were in individuals over the age of 50.⁵ However, there has been a growing trend of young adults (ages 20-45 years) in the United States being diagnosed with colorectal cancer since the 1990s, despite rates decreasing in older (50+ years) adults.⁷ Besides age, other risk factors include being overweight or obese, not being physically active, a diet with too much red meat and/or processed meat, smoking, heavy alcohol use, a personal and/or family history of colorectal polyps or cancer, a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease, or having an inherited syndrome (like Lynch syndrome, or familial adenomatous polyposis).

- 1) American Cancer Society. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/what-is-colorectal-cancer.html> on 9/5/22 at 11:20 AM
- 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/what-is-colorectal-cancer.htm on 9/5/22 at 1:40 PM
- 3) American Cancer Society. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/screening-tests-used.html> on 9/6/22 at 2:20 PM
- 4) United States Preventative Services Task Force 2016 Colorectal Cancer Screening Guidelines. Accessed at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/document/RecommendationStatementFinal/colorectal-cancer-screening#tab> on 9/5/22 at 2:15 PM
- 5) U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2021 submission data (1999-2019): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz, released in June 2022.
- 6) West Virginia Cancer Registry
- 7) American Cancer Society. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/cancer-currents-blog/2020/colorectal-cancer-rising-younger-adults> on 9/7/22 at 12:15 PM

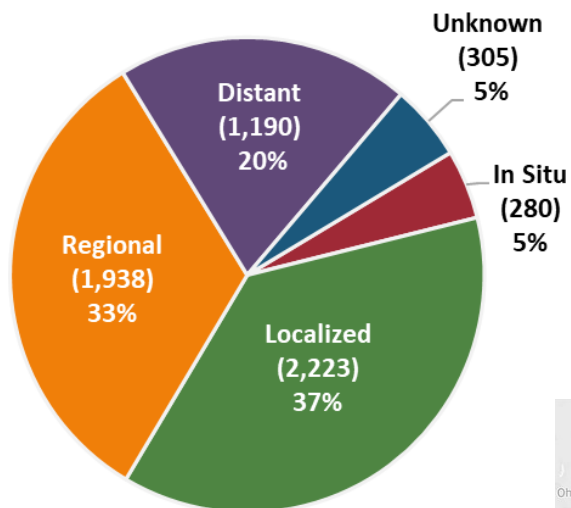
Colorectal Cancer Incidence and Mortality Rate (per 100,000) and Counts, West Virginia, 2015-2019

	Incidence		Mortality	
	Rate	Cases	Rate	Deaths
Both	45.5	5,647	17.0	2,179
Males	51.6	3,007	19.9	1,154
Females	39.8	2,640	14.4	1,025

Colorectal Cancer Case Counts by Age Group, West Virginia, 2015-2019



Percentage of Colorectal Cancer Cases by Stage at Diagnosis, West Virginia, 2015-2019



Average Annual Age-Adjusted Colorectal Cancer Incidence Rates by County, West Virginia, 2015-2019

