

Familial Colon Cancer

Because you have a family history of colon cancer, you are more likely to get colon cancer than a person who does not have a family history. However, your risk is less than a person with a hereditary cancer syndrome.

To help you understand your risk, consider the following:

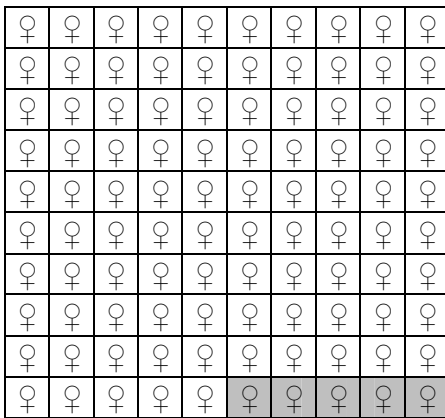
Average Risk

Every person has a chance of getting colon cancer.

In the U.S. the chance that a person will get colon cancer in their lifetime is 5%.

This means that 1 out of every 20 people will get colon cancer, or 5 people out of 100.

The darker squares represent people who will get colon cancer.

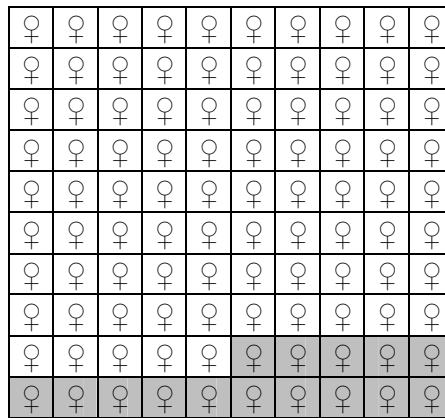


Your Risk

People with a family history of colon cancer – like you – are about 2 to 3 times more likely to get colon cancer.

That means that your chance of getting colon cancer is about 15%. Said another way, 15 out of 100 people will get cancer.

Even though your chance is higher, 85 out of 100 people at familial risk will not develop colon cancer.

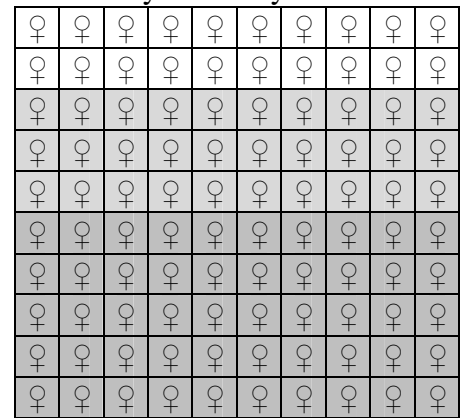


Hereditary Risk

Only 1 in 200 to 1 in 500 people in the U.S. have a gene change that increases their chance of getting colon cancer to between 50% and 80%.

This means that 50 to 80 people out of 100 will get colon cancer (shown as light gray below).

People in this group should see a genetic counselor and think about getting tested for a hereditary cancer syndrome.



While you cannot change your family history, there are **THINGS YOU CAN DO**.

You can lower your chances of getting colon cancer by:

- Having a doctor remove colon polyps.
- Exercising for 30-45 minutes, 5 days a week.

You can **AVOID** risk factors by not:

- Gaining a lot of weight.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages.
- Smoking cigarettes.

See your doctor.

- Start screening for colon cancer at age 40.

To learn more about risk factors for colon cancer, go to:

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/prevention/colorectal/Patient/page3>
<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/ColonandRectumCancer/DetailedGuide/index>