

You can help reduce your colon cancer risk, expert says

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Preventive measures include screening, food choices and moderate exercise.

(HealthDay)—Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States, but there are ways you can help prevent it, an expert says.

"Colorectal cancer surpasses breast and [prostate cancers](#) as a leading cause of cancer death in men and women," Dr. James Yoo, an assistant professor of surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles, said in a university news release.

"It is largely preventable with early screening and detection," said Yoo, who also is chief of the colon and rectal surgery program.

He outlined a number of ways to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer:

- Get regular colorectal cancer screenings beginning at age 50 if you are at normal risk. If you are at higher risk—due to a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, other cancers or [inflammatory bowel disease](#)—talk to your doctor about screenings before age 50.
- Eat between 25 and 30 grams of fiber each day from fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, and whole-grain breads and cereals. You should also eat a low-fat diet. Colorectal cancer has been associated with diets high in saturated fat. Be sure your diet includes foods with folate, such as [leafy green vegetables](#).
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Quit smoking. Alcohol and tobacco combined are linked to colorectal and other [gastrointestinal cancers](#).
- Get at least 20 minutes of exercise a day three to four times a week. Even moderate exercise such as walking, gardening or climbing stairs may help reduce your risk of colorectal cancer.
- Tell your doctor about any persistent symptoms, such as blood in the stool, a change in bowel habits, weight loss, stools that are narrower than usual, abdominal pains or other [gastrointestinal problems](#).
- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity may raise the risk of [colorectal cancer](#).

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [colorectal cancer prevention](#).

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