

# AGA answers call for quality colorectal cancer patient info

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Patients depend on the internet for health information, but when it comes to colorectal cancer, currently available resources are not meeting their needs. A new study finds that there is a notable variation in accuracy, quality and readability of patient-oriented web information on colorectal cancer. Further, most websites lack important information regarding polyps and their importance for future follow-up surveillance colonoscopies. These findings were recently published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, the official clinical practice journal of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA).

Recognizing the lack of high-quality patient websites written at appropriate reading levels, AGA recently launched its new [PatientINFO Center](#) to provide credible, accessible [information](#) to patients on a vast array of GI conditions and procedures, including colorectal cancer.

Looking to the study's findings, here is how AGA's newly released resources differ from colorectal cancer information already on the web:

- Study finding: only 30 percent of patient materials evaluated had a reading level that is acceptable for the general public (Flesch Reading Ease Score of 60 or above). AGA response: AGA's materials have been written at the lowest reading level possible to ensure there is no misunderstanding of information. Using the same readability tool that was used in the study, AGA's patient materials receive a standard grade of 59.7.
- Study finding: most websites only focused on the predominant

screening test used in the country where the website originated, and did not provide information on other options for colorectal cancer screening. AGA response: AGA's patient resource "Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 104: Getting Tested" includes information on all FDA-approved screening options (colonoscopy, [fecal immunochemical test](#), fecal occult blood test, stool DNA test, flexible sigmoidoscopy and CT colonography) allowing patients to have thoughtful conversations with their health providers and make informed decisions.

- Study finding: only 10 percent of websites described screening intervals for each test. AGA response: for each test noted above, AGA has outlined how often patients need the test.

"High-quality and readable websites are essential to provide patients with reliable information to make informed decisions on colorectal screening and surveillance participation," said lead study author Eline Schreuders, MD, from Erasmus MC University Medical Center, Rotterdam, Netherlands. "We appreciate that AGA kept these principles in mind when developing their new PatientINFO Center. We look forward to incorporating this resource into future studies."

In the U.S., colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed among men and women and the second leading cause of death from cancer. Colorectal [cancer](#) largely can be prevented through routine screening. For additional information on [colorectal cancer](#), view AGA's new patient resources. Each of the below is publicly available by visiting <http://www.gastro.org/patient-care/conditions-diseases/colorectal-cancer>.

- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 101: What is Colorectal Cancer? ([English](#); [Spanish](#))
- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 102: Symptoms ([English](#); [Spanish](#))
- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 103: Risk Factors ([English](#); [Spanish](#))
- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 104: Getting Tested ([English](#); [Spanish](#))

- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) 105: Prevention ([English](#); [Spanish](#))

**More information:** Eline H. Schreuders et al. Variable Quality and Readability of Patient-Oriented Websites on Colorectal Cancer Screening, *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.cgh.2016.06.029](#)

Provided by American Gastroenterological Association

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