

\*Kwahji:yä' means "relatives" in the Onödowa'ga (Great Hill People or Seneca) language

(Ojibwe) • Ishkish (Chickasaw) • Chuhsanee (Cherokee) • Chibo (Creek) • Meshkwa (Sac'n Fox)

# COLORECTAL CANCER

Your life is important. Your kwahji:yä' need you around.

## But(t) I don't have any symptoms!

Having regular screenings is important because most individuals with early stage colorectal cancer do not experience any signs or symptoms. Indigenous people are often diagnosed with colorectal cancer in its later and more fatal stages when symptoms are more obvious. Screening can help rule out cancer or other issues, or prevent cancer from spreading.

Colorectal cancer often begins with the development of small, non-cancerous clumps of cells called 'polyps' that line the inside of the colon. With time, polyps may grow, develop into cancer and spread.



American Indian  
Cancer Foundation.

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## Colorectal Cancer often develops with these signs and symptoms

- ▶ Change in bowel movements:
  - In frequency or consistency, such as constipation or diarrhea
  - In shape of stool (poop); stool will often be narrower due to the presence of polyps impacting it
  - Rectal bleeding or blood (bright red or dark brown) in the stool
- ▶ 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 and fatigue
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss

The signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer may be confused with other conditions, such as hemorrhoids, menstrual or gynecological issues, and irritable bowel syndrome. **Screening is recommended for all Indigenous people beginning at age 45.** However, screening can be done at any age if symptoms are present.

Your health is sacred. Get screened for you and your kwahji:yä'.



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