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# Colorectal Cancer & Filipinos "Wiki" Alert

## Incidence and Mortality Rates Among Filipinos

- Colon cancer is the one of the leading causes of cancer death among Filipino men and women. (Miller et al, 2008)
- Colon cancer is the second most common cancer in Filipino women and the third among Filipino men. (Miller et al, 2008)
- Filipino men are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced stage colorectal cancer than other Asians and non-Hispanic whites. (Northern California Cancer Center, 2007)
- Filipinos have poor survival rates for colon and rectal cancers compared to other ethnic groups in the U.S. (Cooper et al, 1997)

"Wiki" is the Hawaiian language word for "fast." The intent of these "Wiki" Alerts are to provide brief informational resources about chronic disease issues that impact Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders.

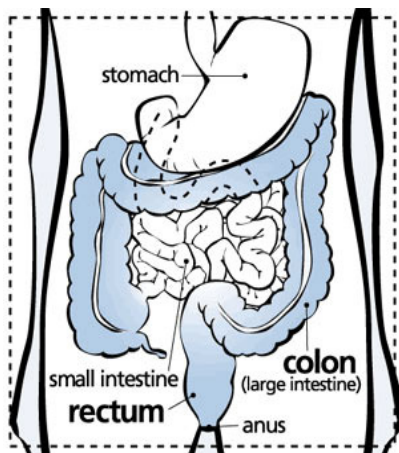
## March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer screening saves lives. If you are 50 or older, you need to get tested for colorectal cancer.



*"If everyone aged 50 years old or older were screened regularly, up to 60% of deaths from this cancer could be avoided."* (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)

## Colorectal Cancer Facts



**Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S.** Colorectal cancer is an abnormal growth of cells in the colon or rectum. It usually begins in the form of a polyp, which is a small growth in the colon that over time can turn into cancerous tumors, or colorectal cancer. Not all polyps will become cancer, but it is important to remove them since we are unable to tell which ones will remain harmless and which will become cancerous.

**Colorectal cancer is preventable and treatable when detected early and with proper screening.** Colorectal screening tests can find polyps in the colon or rectum. Once found they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening tests can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

No one knows the exact cause of colorectal cancer. However, research has shown that people with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop colorectal cancer.

The colon and rectum help the body digest food. The colon is also called the large intestine. The last 8-10 inches of the colon is the rectum.

## Symptoms

Screening is vital since early stages of colorectal cancer often have no symptoms. If you experience any of these warning signs, you should talk to your doctor.

- Change in bowel habits
- Blood in the stool and/or bleeding from the rectum
- Stools that are narrower than usual

- Chronic fatigue
- General abdominal discomfort such as cramps and gas pains
- Unexplained weight loss

For more information, check out Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Screen for Life: National Colorectal Cancer Action Campaign website [www.cdc.gov/cancer/screenforlife](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/screenforlife).

## Risk of Colorectal Cancer

These factors increase the risk of colorectal cancer.

- **History:** Persons with a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, polyps, and/or chronic inflammatory bowel disease.
- **Age:** Anyone at any age can get colorectal cancer, but the risk increases with age. Over 90% of colorectal cancers are found among those over the age of 50.
- **Physical inactivity:** Studies report that increasing your physical activity either in intensity, duration, or frequency to reduces your risk of developing colorectal cancer by 30–40%. (Slattery, 2004)
- **Overweight and obesity:** Colorectal cancer occurs more frequently in people who are obese than in those of a healthy weight.
- **Diet:** Diets with a high amount of fat, such as red and processed meat, and low in fiber have been linked to an increased risk of colorectal cancer.
- **Diabetes:** Studies have found an association between diabetes and increased risk for colorectal cancer.
- **Smoking:** Cigarette smoking increases the risk of developing polyps and colorectal cancer.

## Take These Steps to Reduce Your Risk

While screening is the most important way to prevent colorectal cancer, there are lifestyle changes that can reduce your risk for polyps and colorectal cancer.

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- If you do drink alcohol beverages, limit your consumption.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Eat healthy foods in your diet:
  - ◇ Eat a low-fat diet and limit your consumption of processed foods and meat.
  - ◇ Avoid salt-cured, pickled and smoked foods.
  - ◇ Eat a high fiber diet.
  - ◇ Eat 5 or more servings of a variety of fruits and vegetables a day.
  - ◇ Increase intake of foods with high levels of Vitamins A, C and D.
- Consider taking calcium supplements and a daily multivitamin with folic acid.



### A Healthier Recipe– Chicken Adobo with Coconut Milk

1/2 lb. lean chicken (skin removed)  
3 segments of garlic  
1/3 cup light coconut milk  
1 tablespoon vinegar

1/8 cup light soy sauce  
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon ginger root  
1/2 cup cubed potatoes

Marinate chicken in vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, black pepper, and ginger root. Set aside for several minutes. Put chicken in saucepan and simmer until tender. When done, add coconut milk and potatoes. Boil for another 5 minutes or until broth has become thick. Serve with steamed rice (brown or white) and some fruit and vegetables.

### A Healthier Pinakbet Recipe

2 tablespoon cooking oil  
3 cloves garlic, diced  
1 small onion, peeled and diced  
1 tomato, finely chopped  
1 cup water

1 small squash or pumpkin, peeled and cubed  
Few pieces of green beans, cut into 2 inches long  
6 pieces okra, cut in half  
1 small eggplant, sliced into 2 inches long  
1 cup of shrimp

Heat oil in saucepan. Saute the garlic, onion and tomato. Stir well. Add the water. Simmer for 3-5 minutes. Add the squash. Once cooked, add the green beans, eggplant, okra and the shrimp. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve immediately with steamed rice.

## Screening for Colorectal Cancer

Regular colorectal screening is the best way to find polyps or cancerous growths in the colon or rectal. **Even if you feel healthy, you should get screened for colorectal cancer if you are 50 or over.** People at high risk for colorectal cancer may need earlier or more frequent tests than others. Talk to your doctor about which test is right for you.

- **\*Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)**– A take home test kit that looks for blood in the stool which can indicate the presence of growths in the colon or rectum.
- **\*Sigmoidoscopy**– Procedure which uses a lighted tube to

examine the interior walls of the *lower* portion of the colon and rectum.

- **\*Double Contrast Barium Enema** – After a special enema is given, x-rays examine the colon and rectum for growths.
- **Colonoscopy** – Procedures which uses a lighted tube to examine the interior walls of the *entire* colon and rectum for growths.

**\*If any of these tests are found abnormal or a polyp or growth is found, you will need to have a colonoscopy.**