

# Colorectal Cancer Patients Should Not Assume Care is Unavailable

*People experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms or delays in colorectal cancer care should address these questions with their care team.*

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, US, May 5, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the uncertainty of the COVID-19 outbreak, the [Colon Cancer Coalition](#)

recommends that anyone currently living with [symptoms of colorectal cancer](#) and patients experiencing treatment delays should not assume that care is unavailable. Individuals experiencing blood in their stool, significant unexplained weight loss, or changes in bowel habits, among other symptoms, should talk about their concerns with a physician. We also advise colorectal cancer patients currently living with treatment delays advocate for themselves with their care team.



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*Colon Cancer Coalition*

We support the action of health care facilities across the country to defer elective screening colonoscopies, not only to help deploy health care resources to those in greatest need, but also to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for patients and health care providers alike. As elective procedures begin to become more available, it is vitally important for individuals experiencing symptoms of colorectal cancer to proactively reach out to their provider for help and to determine what [care or diagnostic evaluations are appropriate](#). There are now many

telemedicine options available to help determine how urgent your issues may be and what treatment options are appropriate.

In addition to the stress of living through a global health pandemic, the colorectal cancer patient community, like others managing cancer, is experiencing additional anxiety with delays in care and added concerns about their risk of contracting COVID-19. We encourage all cancer patients to talk with their care team about their risk and how a delay in treatment may or may not impact their care and outcomes, and to determine what care can be done through telemedicine without frequent visits to care facilities.

## QUESTIONS TO SPUR DISCUSSION WITH YOUR CARE TEAM

For individuals experiencing symptoms:

- Make a record of your symptoms, including how long you have been experiencing them.
- Write down any risk factors you have, your family history of gastrointestinal disease, etc. Make sure to have these items handy during your telemedicine appointment.
- If a colonoscopy is unavailable to you at this time ask if an at-home stool-based test is appropriate for your symptoms.
- Determine what the follow-up care will be if the at-home stool-based test has a positive result.

For current cancer patients experiencing delays in care:

- Ask why your treatment is delayed and what risks may be associated with that delay.
- Ask if there are alternative chemotherapy treatments that can be used in the short term that do not require treatment in an infusion center or if care is available at a facility outside of the hospital.
- If visits to the infusion room are required, request appointments at off peak times and find out what precautions you should take in advance of the visit and while you are there. Many infusion centers are limiting visitors, find out what your treatment center's policy is.

Colorectal cancer symptoms:

Multiple symptoms or persistent symptoms lasting more than two weeks need to be evaluated by a physician. Don't wait to call and talk to a medical professional about your concerns.

- Blood in your stool
- Change in Bathroom Habits
- Fatigue
- Anemia
- Unexplained Weight Loss
- Persistent Cramps or Low Back Pain
- Feeling Bloating

About the Colon Cancer Coalition

The Colon Cancer Coalition is based in Minnesota and dedicated to encouraging screening and raising awareness of colorectal cancer. The organization's signature Get Your Rear in Gear® and Tour de Tush® event series are volunteer-driven in communities throughout the United States. In 2019 the Coalition granted over \$1 million dollars to local communities to build and sustain programs promoting early prevention, screening, as well as patient support efforts for those living with this disease. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic many of the scheduled 2020 fundraising events have been taken online to raise money to fund these programs. By making the words colon, colorectal and colonoscopy a part of the everyday language, we believe we can overcome the fear and decrease deaths from this largely preventable cancer. For more information or to support the Coalition's efforts, please visit [ColonCancerCoalition.org](http://ColonCancerCoalition.org).

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