

# Facts about Colorectal Cancer in California

California Department of Public Health Cancer Surveillance & Research Branch  
California Cancer Registry, [www.ccrca.org](http://www.ccrca.org)

Colorectal cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in California. In 2010, the California Cancer Registry estimates that over 14,000 Californians will be diagnosed with this disease.

Colorectal cancer kills more Californians than any other cancer except lung cancer. In 2010, more than 5,000 Californians will die from the disease.

Unlike many other cancers, colorectal cancer is highly *preventable, treatable, and beatable*, but only with proper screening. Proper screening increases the chance of finding colorectal cancer early, when treatment is most effective. Even more importantly, screening can prevent colorectal cancer

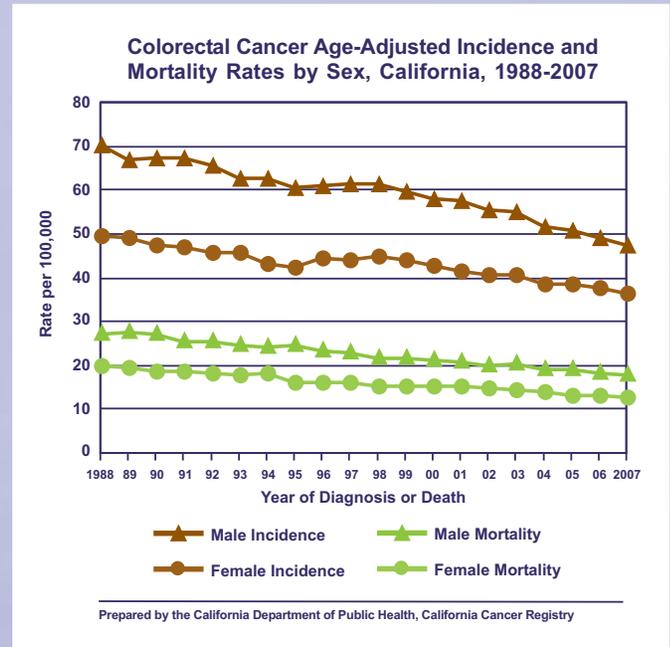
from occurring at all, because it can help find and remove pre-cancerous growths before cancer develops.

Anyone can get colorectal cancer, especially if you are 50 years or older, have a family history of the disease, or are in a high risk group. That is why it is important to be screened starting at age 50 (or younger depending on your individual risk for developing the disease). Ask your doctor when you should get screened.

## California Colorectal Cancer Rates are Going Down

Colorectal cancer rates have steadily declined over the past twenty years as more people have been screened. Between 1988 and 2007, incidence rates (new cases) of colorectal cancer have dropped

by -29.9 percent for men and -24.9 percent for women. Colorectal cancer mortality (death) rates have also gone down.



Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor  
State of California  
Kimberly Belshé, Secretary  
California Health and Human Services  
Agency  
Mark B. Horton, MD, MSPH, Director  
California Department of Public Health

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Colorectal cancer rates are not going down equally for all groups. African Americans have the highest risk of getting colorectal cancer compared to other racial/ethnic groups in California, and Hispanics have the lowest risk. Non-Hispanic whites in California have had the greatest drop in colorectal cancer rates over the past 20-years (-27.9 percent), followed by African Americans (-19.5 percent) and Asian/ Pacific Islanders (-12.9 percent). Hispanic rates, while low, have declined only slightly (-8.2 percent).

Colorectal cancer risk is not the same for all Asians. Japanese and Koreans have higher rates than other Asian subgroups, and South Asians have the lowest rates. Unlike other groups who have had decreasing or stable rates, Koreans in California have experienced an increase in colorectal cancer rates over the past 20-years.

## Colorectal Cancer is Being Diagnosed at Late Stage for too many Californians

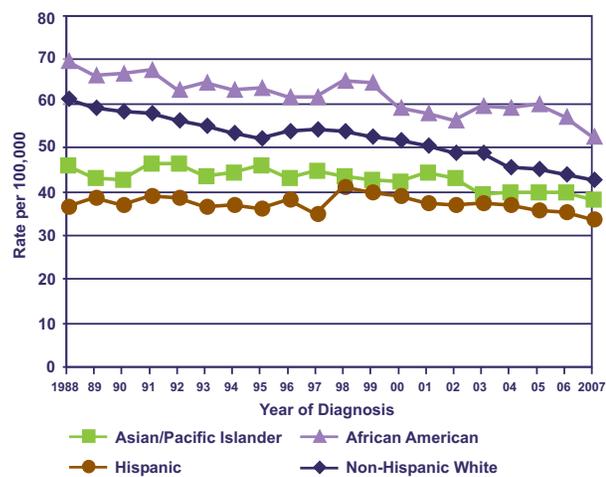
Despite the availability of highly effective colorectal cancer screening tests, more than half of colorectal cancer cases in California are diagnosed at late stage, after the disease has spread beyond the colon, which makes it much more difficult to treat. Contact your doctor to find out about screening procedures to help prevent colorectal cancer.

## Early Detection and Prevention is the Key to Successful Treatment and Survival

Ninety percent of those diagnosed with colorectal cancer when it is localized (not spread beyond the colon or rectum) are alive five years after diagnosis. Five-year survival drops to about 66 percent when the cancer is diagnosed at a regional stage (cancer has spread to nearby tissues or lymph nodes). Once the cancer has spread to distant organs (called metastasis), only 10 percent of patients are alive five years later. Early and regular screening is the key to early diagnosis and successful treatment.

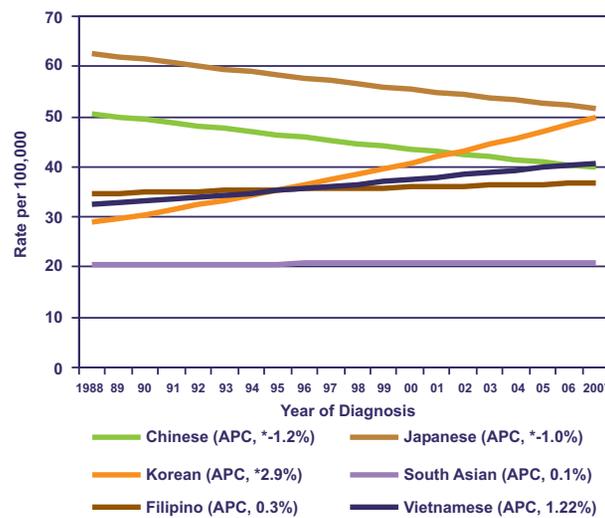
For more information: Visit the CCR website [www.ccrca.org](http://www.ccrca.org)

Colorectal Cancer Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates by Race/Ethnicity, California, 1988-2007



Prepared by the California Department of Public Health, California Cancer Registry

Trend in Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates among Asian Subgroups, 1988-2007



\* The Annual Percent Change (APC) is significantly different from zero ( $p < 0.05$ ).  
Prepared by the California Department of Public Health, California Cancer Registry