Colorectal Cancer Incidence Is a Growing Concern Among Gen-X, Millennials, and Gen-Z

Colon and rectal cancer remain the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S.

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Colorectal cancer (CRC) is on the rise among the younger population, and the 20-39 age group seems the most affected, according to the American Cancer Society. The recent passing of the "Black Panther" star Chadwick Boseman, who lost his 4-year long battle to colon cancer at age 43, has shone the spotlight on this concerning trend. Boseman's tragic death provides an opportunity to convey the urgent message of how colon cancer can impact a young person's health, even if they are younger than the suggested screening age for those at average risk–usually 50 years.

For several years now, the Colon Cancer Foundation has been trying to address this issue from the prevention perspective, by bringing together experts across the field at its annual Early-Age Onset Colorectal Cancer Summit.

Colon and rectal cancer remain the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S., and the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer globally, and their differentiator is the location of the cancerous lesion(s). The last 12 centimeters of the large intestine is identified as the rectum, while the rest of the large intestine is classified as the colon—advanced imaging technology can help identify the exact location of the tumor. Identifying whether a person has colon or rectal cancer is also important to identify the treatment strategy needed to fight the cancer.

Though older age and aging are risk factors for CRC, colon and rectal cancers can both be attributed to varying lifestyle influences including diet, exercise, and alcohol consumption.

This article is from the Colon Cancer Foundation. You can read the full article, published on September 27, 2020, on the foundation's website.

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