

Early-Age Onset Colorectal Cancer: Health Disparities in the Black Population

Black people are more likely to be diagnosed with CRC at a younger age and a more advanced stage than white people.

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Colorectal cancer (CRC) is a leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., and the incidence of early-age onset CRC (EAO-CRC)—when the disease is diagnosed in those younger than 50 years—is rising. In the Black population, EAO-CRC makes up nearly 10% of all new diagnoses. The incidence of EAO-CRC in the Black population (8.4 cases per 100,000 people in 2019) is slightly lower than that of the White population (8.9 cases per 100,000 people in 2019), but this is reversed when it comes to the mortality rate. The mortality rate of EAO-CRC in the Black population is 2.4 deaths per 100,000 people, while it is 1.8 deaths per 100,000 people in the White population. Between 2015-2019, [5,329 new EAO-CRC cases](#) were diagnosed among Black Americans.

Studies have shown that Black individuals are more likely to be diagnosed with EAO-CRC at a younger age and a more [advanced stage](#) than White individuals: 22% of White Americans receive a metastatic diagnosis compared with 26% of Black Americans.

While additional research is needed to discern the higher incidence of EAO-CRC in the Black population, certain [socioeconomic and environmental factors](#) likely play an important role. These include limited access to proper healthcare services, the prevalence of food deserts leading to poor nutrition, and living in areas with high pollution rates. Additional resources to support research, prevention, and treatment efforts of EAO-CRC in this population are critical.

Empowering the population via awareness and education campaigns around the early warning signs of CRC and the importance of screening in the Black community would also go a long way. [Early warning signs of CRC](#) include changes in bowel movements, blood in stool, unexpected weight loss, and continuous abdominal discomfort. If you are experiencing these symptoms, speak with your doctor.

Additional information on prevention, symptoms, and diagnosis of CRC can be found under 'Resources' on the [Colon Cancer Foundation's website](#).

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/earlyage-onset-colorectal-cancer-health-disparities-black-population>