

# Canadians on Colorectal Cancer

*Familiarity with Colorectal Cancer Lags Other Cancers, But Canadians Believe Cancer can be Cured, Prevented with Healthy Lifestyle, Early Detection*

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## Canadians on Colorectal Cancer

*Familiarity with Colorectal Cancer Lags Other Cancers, But Canadians Believe Cancer can be Cured, Prevented with Healthy Lifestyle, Early Detection*

**Toronto, ON** – Top-of-mind, unaided recall of colorectal cancer (43%) is behind that of breast cancer (66%) and lung cancer (64%), according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the Dairy Farmers of Canada and Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada. This places colorectal cancer 3<sup>rd</sup>, ahead of other cancer such as brain cancer (39%), prostate cancer (38%), skin cancer (37%), liver cancer (23%), pancreatic cancer (19%), stomach cancer (15%), bone cancer (15%), throat/pharyngeal/laryngeal cancer (14%), ovarian cancer (13%), leukemia (12%) and blood cancer (10%).

Not surprisingly, top-of-mind recall largely mirrors familiarity, with 72% saying they are at least somewhat familiar with breast cancer, ahead of lung (65%), skin (61%), prostate (56%), colorectal (43%), brain (42%), bone (39%) and stomach cancer (35%). Interestingly, familiarity seems to closely mirror the perceived deadliness of these types of cancers, with lung cancer being perceived by 42% as the deadliest form of cancer, significantly higher than the proportion who believe that breast (20%), brain (14%), colorectal (9%), prostate (6%), skin (4%), bone (4%) or stomach cancer (2%) is the deadliest.

While a majority of Canadians say they're at least somewhat concerned about developing breast (66%), prostate (63%) or skin cancer (52%), fewer say they're concerned about developing colorectal (46%), lung (43%), stomach (36%), brain (33%) or bone cancer (30%).

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### ***Social Stigma Around Cancer...***

The data reveal that there exists a certain level of perceived social stigma around being tested for or being diagnosed with various forms of cancer. When it comes to being screened, three in ten (27%) say they'd be at least somewhat embarrassed about telling coworkers or anyone who isn't a family member or close friend that they're being screened for prostate cancer, while a similar proportion (24%) expresses embarrassment about announcing that they are being screened for colorectal cancer. Fewer say they'd be embarrassed about announcing that they're being screened for breast (13%) or skin cancer (13%).

More, however, say they'd be embarrassed to announce to coworkers or other non-family members that they have been diagnosed with prostate (29%), colorectal (27%), skin (20%) or breast cancer (19%), suggesting that the perceived social stigma of a diagnoses is even greater than that of simply being screened.

### ***Focus on Colorectal Cancer...***

On average, Canadians believe that 52% of all cases of colorectal cancer could be prevented if recommended healthy lifestyle habits were adopted. Moreover, Canadians believe that 59% of all colorectal cancer diagnoses could be cured if they were detected at an early stage.

In fact, most (77%) agree that people with colorectal cancer have a very high survival rate if the disease is detected at an early stage, and 72% agree that it can be prevented by adopting certain lifestyle habits. Further, just 30% believe that colorectal cancer has noticeable symptoms that allow the disease to be detected at an early stage, without screening. Among those who agree, blood in the stool (79%), a change in stool colour or texture (63%), abdominal pain (53%), weight loss (48%), constipation (42%), loss of appetite (34%), constant



fatigue (32%) muscle pain elsewhere than in the abdomen (21%), hemorrhoids (20%), anemia (18%), sleep disruption (12%) and migraines (8%) are believed to be noticeable symptoms.

Regular colorectal cancer screeners are critical for early detection. Thinking about the age at which screenings should become part of a regular medical checkup, only 35% know that they should begin at the age of 50. Interestingly, Six in ten (57%) think they should begin before the age of 50. The average age at which Canadians believe screenings should begin is 44 years of age.

Thinking about the relative weight or responsibility of various factors on colorectal cancer in Canada, Canadians believe that lifestyle has the most influence (38%), followed by heredity (30%), age (24%), and finally the region where someone lives (8%). Focusing on lifestyle, specifically, diet (27%) smoking (19%) and obesity (18%) are believed to be disproportionately more influential than other influences such as lack of physical activity (16%), alcohol (13%), and caffeine (6%).

### ***Changing Lifestyle to Help Prevent Cancer...***

Contemplating the degree to which life event would encourage Canadians to adopt better lifestyle habits to reduce their risk of colorectal cancer, 86% say the death of a family member or friend from colorectal cancer would inspire them to live better, followed by follow-up and support from a team of experts (76%), reimbursement by their employer of expenses to improve their lifestyle (73%), the birth of a child (66%), online information on recommended changes in behaviour (64%), free online nutrition and physical activity programs (63%) and finally a user-friendly mobile app that tracks eating habits and physical activities and gives advice (51%).



Most Canadians appear willing to make changes to their lives in this manner. Given the chance to follow a four-week program meant to make real changes to their level of physical activity and eating habits, 72% say they'd be willing (28% completely/43% somewhat) to follow the program, while just 28% are either unwilling (11% somewhat unwilling/4% not at all) or say they don't need such a program (13%).

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between November 16 and 24, 2015, on behalf of the Dairy Farmers of Canada and Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada. For this survey, a sample of 2,545 Canadians from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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