

# What Are the Risk Factors for Colon and Rectum Cancer?

A risk factor is anything that increases a person's chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Different cancers have different risk factors. For example, unprotected exposure to strong sunlight is a risk factor for skin cancer and smoking is a risk factor for cancers of the lungs, larynx, mouth, throat, esophagus, kidneys, bladder, and several other organs. Researchers have identified *several risk factors* that increase a person's chance of developing colorectal cancer:

- A family history of colorectal cancer;
- Familial colorectal cancer syndromes;
- A personal history of colorectal cancer;
- A personal history of intestinal polyps;
- A personal history of chronic inflammatory bowel disease;
- Aging;
- A diet mostly from animal sources;
- Physical inactivity;
- Obesity; and
- Smoking.

