



**APTA Oncology**<sup>SM</sup>

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Student and New  
Professional Subcommittee

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**Downloads:**

Colorectal

Cancer



# Colorectal Cancer



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## Statistics

- **3rd most diagnosed cancer** in men and women in the United States
- **Most colorectal cancers are adenocarcinomas** (96% of all colorectal cancers)
  - Though other types may be Carcinoid tumors, Gastrointestinal Stromal tumors, or Sarcomas

## Risk Factors

- History of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Familial history of colorectal cancer, and/or Inherited Syndromes
- Obesity, sedentary lifestyle, smoking, heavy alcohol use, high consumption of red meats or processed foods

## Signs and Symptoms

- Change in bowel habits (frequency and/or consistency)
- Abdominal pain
- Bloody stool
- Melena (black tarry stool)
- Hematochezia (bright red blood per the rectum)
- With advanced disease may experience jaundice, hepatomegaly, adenopathy, or bowel obstruction

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## Treatments

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Surgical resection
  - Open or Laparoscopic techniques

- **Reduction in physical activity** due to cancer, surgery, and related treatments
  - **Loss of muscle mass, strength, and endurance**
  - **Reduced independence and quality of life**
- Scar tissue adhesions/myofascial restriction in the abdomen
- Depending on the location of the tumor and surgery performed may result in a temporary or permanent ileostomy or colostomy

## Clinical Implications



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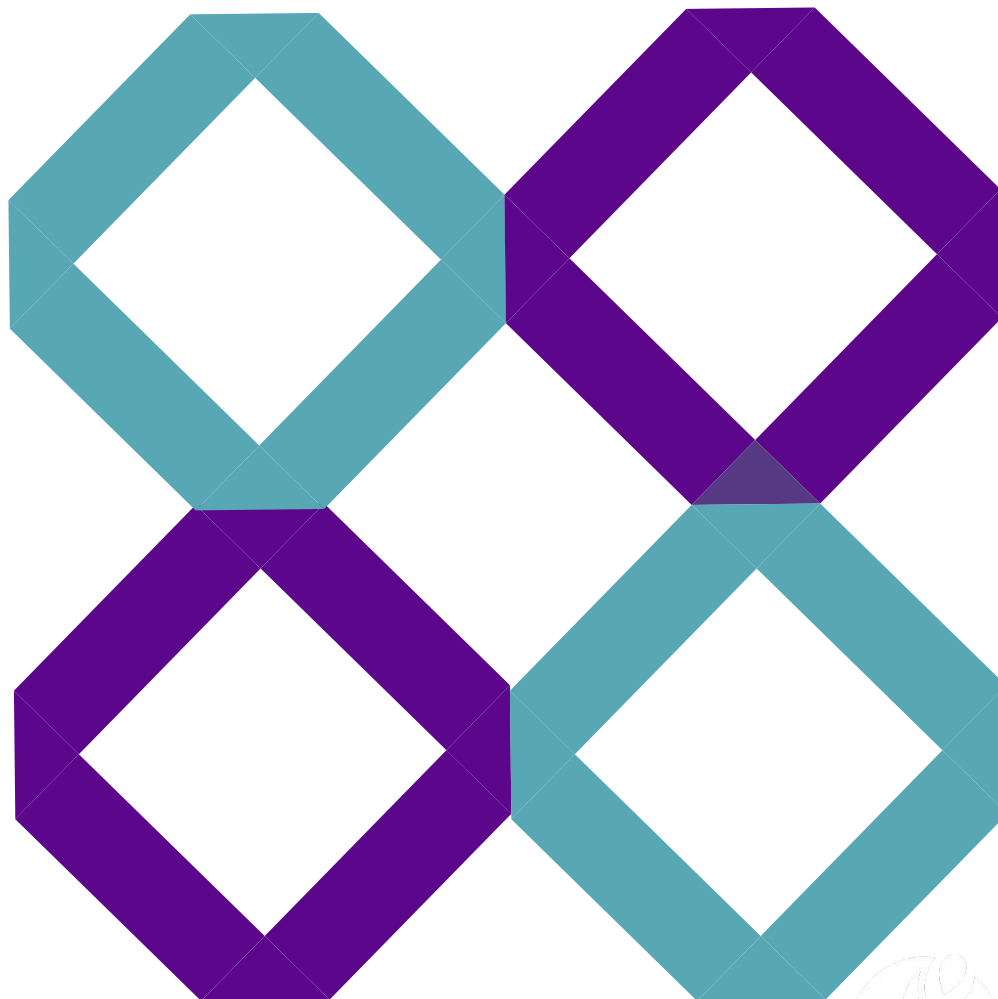
## Physical Therapist's Role

### Prevention

Education on lifestyle modifications can reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer

### Assess

Assess for symptoms related to treatment (Fatigue, CIPN)



### Prehab

Promote cardiorespiratory and strength gains prior to surgery to promote optimal outcomes

### Educate

Post-op education and guidance on endurance and strength training to promote QoL



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## Takeaways

1

Exercise can play a role in the **prevention or risk reduction of colorectal cancer**

2

**Appropriate aerobic and resistance training prior to and following** surgery is beneficial in promoting recovery and improving physical function

3

Following surgery and adjuvant treatments there **may be scar tissue adhesions or myofascial restrictions** leading to impairments in posture and/or body mechanics

4

Assessment of the patient's nutritional status and **education on appropriate protein intake is important** to promote skeletal muscle mass gains

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## Resources

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