

Cochise Digestive Health Center
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10 Things that you can do to reduce the risk of colon cancer or recurrent colon polyps...

1. **DIET:** Eat a diet that is rich in fruits and vegetables, and low in saturated/"animal" fat. Limit red meat. Limit heavily-processed, smoked, and charred meat.
2. **FIBER:** Eat a high fiber diet. The average American consumes 8 grams of fiber per day... far short of the recommended 25-30 grams!
3. **FOLIC ACID:** Ingest 400 micrograms daily through diet and/or supplements.
4. **CALCIUM:** Ingest at least 1200 mg daily through diet and/or supplements. Women should already be doing this... for osteoporosis prevention! If you are prone to constipation, a calcium *citrate* supplement is preferable as calcium *carbonate* may exacerbate constipation.
5. **MAGNESIUM:** Diets high in magnesium have been linked to lower rates of colon cancer. Good sources of magnesium include leafy green vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains.
6. **EXERCISE:** Moderate physical activity (45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise 5 days per week) has been shown to reduce colon cancer risk by 50%.
7. **MAINTAIN A NORMAL BODY WEIGHT.** Obesity has been shown to double a woman's risk of colon cancer.
8. **STOP SMOKING!!!** Need we say more?
9. **AVOID HEAVY ALCOHOL USE.** If you drink alcohol, then do so in moderation. Studies have suggested that three or more alcoholic beverages per day double one's risk of colon cancer.
10. And, the most important thing that you can do to reduce your risk of colon cancer... **Have a SCREENING COLONOSCOPY!** Return for surveillance (follow-up) colonoscopy at the interval recommended by your doctor. If you have a history of colon polyps, then this interval is *usually* every 3-5 years. It may be longer or shorter than this based on the type/location of previous polyps or your family history.