

Mayo Clinic Minute: Why millennials should know the warning symptoms of colon cancer

Colon cancer rates continue to be on the rise in younger populations. The colon cancer screening guidelines were lowered from age 50 to 45, in part because of the rise in the incidence of colon cancer in younger adults. But that still leaves people under 45 without screening.

Dr. Johanna Chan, a Mayo Clinic gastroenterologist, says it's important understand the warning symptoms of colon cancer and to seek medical attention if you experience them.

Video	Audio
	"Colon cancer is an incredibly common cancer, routinely one of the top five causes of cancer annually. And really anyone is at risk, at any age."
	That age is more often under 55, says Dr. Johanna Chan.
Johanna Chan, M.D. Gastroenterology Mayo Clinic	"We are seeing younger patients present with colon cancer. And unfortunately, they also tend to present at a more advanced stage."
	Ongoing stomach discomfort and unexplained weight loss can be symptoms.
Warning symptoms of colon cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rectal bleeding• Anemia• Change in bowel habits	"In fact, a lot of the warning symptoms, such as rectal bleeding, anemia, change in bowel habits, these are very common symptoms that happen across all ranges of age groups."
	Most young, healthy patients with rectal bleeding won't have colon cancer.
	"It's still on the possible list of diagnoses. And it's really important that young patients actually seek care for any of these symptoms that occur."
TOT: :58	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.

TAG: African Americans have a greater risk of colon cancer than people of other races. Factors that may increase your risk of colon cancer, also referred to as colorectal cancer, may include family history, bowel disease, diabetes, obesity, and environmental exposures, like smoking **or** heavy alcohol use.

Dr. Chan says certain specific factors, such as family history, may require a more individualized approach for colorectal cancer screening. She encourages patients to talk to their health care team to make sure they are individualizing recommendations for them.