
Colorectal Cancer

Find out more at www.damonrunyon.org

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer and the third leading cause of cancer-related mortality in American men and women.

- One in nineteen Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime.
- 146,870 people in the United States were diagnosed with the disease in 2008. Only 65% are likely to survive the next five years.
- In 2008, colorectal cancer took the lives of an estimated 49,920 Americans.

Since 1980, the general five-year survival rate has increased by nearly 28%. This is almost entirely due to the research that led to the development of regular screenings, which are widely available to more quickly diagnose the disease in its early stages.

Our Achievements in Colorectal Cancer Research

Damon Runyon scientists have been on the cutting-edge of colorectal cancer research for more than 30 years. Our scientists:

- ✓ produced the molecule that is the basis for the drug Erbitux (cetuximab), which inhibits human cancer cell growth by blocking receptor tyrosine kinase. Erbitux was approved by the FDA for treatment of colorectal cancer in 2004.
- ✓ demonstrated that certain genetic mutations are responsible for the most common colon cancer predisposition syndrome, Hereditary Non-Polyposis Colorectal Cancer.
- ✓ provided evidence that aspirin and Celebrex (celecoxib) are effective in preventing colorectal cancer in certain patients.

Current Colorectal Cancer Research Projects

Damon Runyon is currently funding many scientists that are researching ways to better diagnose, treat and cure colorectal cancer. These researchers are:

- developing molecular “smart” probes and imaging techniques for earlier and improved detection of colorectal cancer.
- exploring the role intestinal bacteria play in protecting us from colorectal cancer.
- investigating the causes underlying Crohn’s disease, which can give rise to colorectal cancer.
- working to identify new proteins that interact with the cancer-causing protein Ras, which malfunctions in over half of all colorectal cancer cases.
- looking for clues as to how a key colon cancer gene functions.

**Most Statistics adapted from National Cancer Institute’s SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2006*