

Preface

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is a major clinical and public health challenge; it is the third most common cancer and second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. Yet, CRC is a largely preventable disease. It has a long latency period, and it may be several years before a precursor polyp transforms into a malignant growth. These characteristics render CRC an attractive target for screening, both by detection of cancer at early, treatable stages, and more importantly, prevention by the timely detection and removal of precursor precancerous neoplasms. Recent multisociety guidelines have emphasized the central role of prevention in CRC screening strategies.

The CRC screening landscape has undergone revolutionary changes over the past two decades, and remains a dynamic area at the interface of epidemiology, clinical research, outcomes research, public health, medical technology, and molecular and genetic science. The clinician who is considering CRC screening for a patient faces an array of options, considerations, and controversies which may be complex to navigate even for an expert in the field.

In this book, we present the state of the art in CRC screening, including established and new modalities, risk factors and preventive approaches, strategies to promote participation in screening programs, and considerations in special populations. The book should not be viewed as an end statement to CRC screening debates and controversy; rather, it is intended to present an overview of current knowledge and an introduction to areas of active research and unanswered questions. The contributing authors are highly accomplished experts who are well established in their respective fields. We hope that the reader will enjoy reading this book as much as we did putting it together.

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