



## **Early detection of colorectal cancer results in almost 100% patient survival**

Today on World Cancer Day, Cancer Australia has released national data on cancer survival by stage at diagnosis\* for colorectal (or bowel) cancer, which shows five-year survival is 99% if detected at stage 1.

Under the theme of 'I Am and I Will' World Cancer Day 2019 highlights the need for early stage cancer detection to significantly improve cancer patients' chances of survival. World Cancer Day aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year.

Australia has one of the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the world, with approximately 16,400 people expected to be diagnosed in 2019. This year, around 108 Australians are estimated to die each week from colorectal cancer, making it the second most common cause of cancer-related death after lung cancer.

"The data shows that survival remained high for people diagnosed with earlier stage colorectal cancer 5 years from diagnosis" said Dr Helen Zorbas Cancer Australia CEO. "Almost half (46%) of cases were diagnosed at an early stage (stage 1, 22%; stage 2, 24%) and relative survival for early stage cancers remains high 1, 3 and 5 years after diagnosis. This is powerful information demonstrating that early stage cancers can be successfully treated if diagnosed early."

Dr Zorbas said, "People diagnosed with early stage cancer had high survival across all age groups; however people with late stage cancer at diagnosis had lower relative survival and this became progressively lower in subsequent years from diagnosis."

"While more men in Australia are diagnosed with colorectal cancer than women, there was no discernible difference in survival outcomes by stage at diagnosis between men and women."

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) provides an effective way to improve early diagnosis and could save 500 lives each year.

"I encourage all Australians aged between 50 and 74 years to act on the invitation to screen every two years. It is also important for people of all ages, irrespective of participation in the NBCSP, to recognise possible bowel cancer symptoms and have them investigated early," said Dr Zorbas.

Symptoms include a change in bowel habit, rectal bleeding, unexplained weight loss, unusual tiredness and fatigue and abdominal pain, cramping or bloating.

To find out what you can do to prevent colorectal cancer visit the [Cancer Australia](http://www.canceraustralia.gov.au) website.

Detailed analysis of the relative survival by stage at diagnosis for colorectal cancer can be found on Cancer Australia's [National Cancer Control Indicators](http://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/national-cancer-control-indicators) website.

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\* Stage at diagnosis indicates the extent to which a cancer has spread when first diagnosed.

Cancer Australia was established by the Australian Government in 2006 to benefit all Australians affected by cancer, and their families and carers. Cancer Australia aims to reduce the impact of cancer, address disparities and improve outcomes for people affected by cancer by leading and coordinating national, evidence-based interventions across the continuum of care.

Initiated by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) [World Cancer Day](http://www.worldcancerday.org) takes place every year on 4 February and is the unifying global initiative under which the world comes together to raise the profile of cancer.