

# COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

## Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

### Lynch Syndrome (LS)

Some colorectal cancers (CRC) are inherited. Approximately 3% of all CRC's are due to an inherited condition called Lynch Syndrome (LS).

**What is it:** LS increases the risk for colorectal, endometrial, and other types of cancer. LS is caused by inherited mutations in genes that repair mismatched DNA.

**Why is it relevant:** Most individuals with LS are undiagnosed, and are at significant increased risk for developing colorectal cancer. First-degree relatives of individuals identified with a LS gene mutation also have a 50% chance to carry the mutation. It is crucial to identify patients with LS and their relatives to allow them to take advantage of interventions that can significantly reduce their risk of cancer in the future.

### *Zach's Story*

*I recently got genetically tested, and I tested positive for Lynch syndrome which runs in the family. The way I described it was it was like you're about to jump into a pool and you know it's going to be really cold when you jump in, but it's still a shock. If you do the math, my great-grandfather had colon cancer, my grandfather and my father and uncle, so while that helps prepare me for the news that I had Lynch it's still a very big eye-opener. Better safe than sorry—worst-case scenario is if I get tested is I can prepare better for the future, and best case scenario is I know I'm in the clear and don't have to worry about anything. If I didn't get tested really it just leaves everything in the air and this is a lot more unknowns. [Read more of Zach's Story by clicking here.](#)*

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## Hereditary Cancer Syndromes

### Family Health History is Important!

You and your family members are more likely to have Lynch syndrome if your family has a strong history of colorectal cancer. Family members who inherit Lynch syndrome usually share the same mutation. If one of your family members has a known Lynch syndrome gene mutation, other family members who get genetic testing should be checked for that mutation.

Read more by clicking here. If you are concerned that you could have Lynch syndrome, or another mutation related to colorectal cancer, the first step is to [collect your family health history of colorectal cancer](#) and share this information with your doctor.

[Read more by clicking here.](#)

### Lynch Syndrome Facts

- It is estimated that 1 in 279 individuals has LS <sup>1</sup>.
- Over 98% of all individuals with LS are undiagnosed <sup>2</sup>.
- It is estimated that there are over 26,000 undiagnosed individuals in Washington State with LS <sup>3</sup>.
- Learn more about Lynch Syndrome and the importance of screening for colorectal cancer at [www.doh.wa.gov/LynchSyndrome](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LynchSyndrome)

### Resources:

1. [Research by Boland, Yurgelun, and Boland.](#)
2. [Research by Hampel and de la Chapelle.](#)
3. [Office of Financial Management WA Population Update.](#)

