

## 10. If colorectal cancer is found, how do doctors describe how far the cancer has spread?

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Doctors use the following stages to describe how the cancer spreads:

- Stage 0 -- The cancer is very early. It is found only in the innermost lining of the colon or rectum.
- Stage I -- The cancer involves more of the inner wall of the colon or rectum.
- Stage II -- The cancer has spread outside the colon or rectum to nearby tissue, but not to the lymph nodes. Lymph nodes are small, bean-shaped structures that are part of the body's immune system.
- Stage III -- The cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes, but not to other parts of the body.
- Stage IV -- The cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Colorectal cancer tends to spread to the liver and/or lungs.
- Recurrent -- Recurrent cancer means the cancer has come back after treatment. The disease may recur in the colon or rectum or in another part of the body.