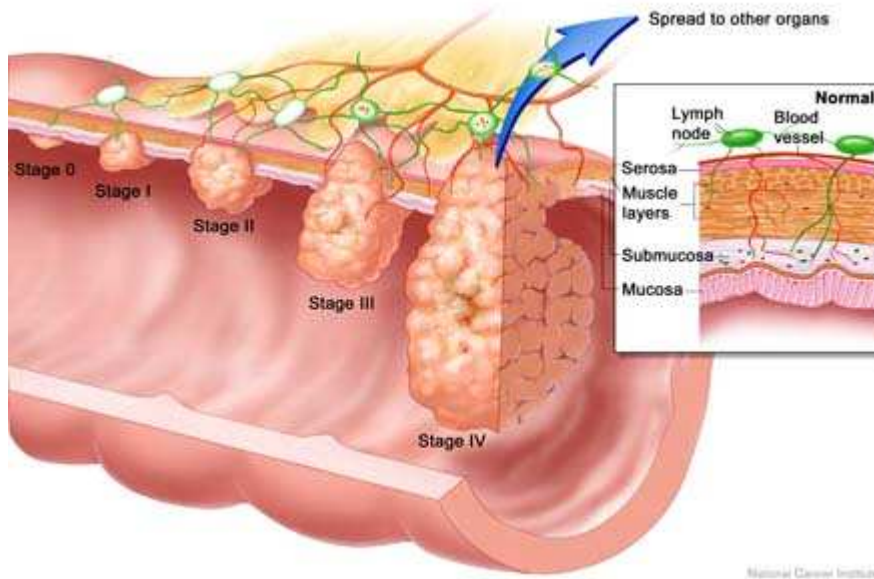




Stages of Colorectal Cancer



Courtesy of the National Cancer Institute

As rectal cancer progresses from Stage 0 to Stage IV, the cancer cells grow through the layers of the rectum wall and spread to lymph nodes and other organs.

Stage 0 (Carcinoma in Situ) - In stage 0, abnormal cells are found in the innermost lining of the rectum. These abnormal cells may become cancer and spread into nearby normal tissue. Stage 0 is also called carcinoma in situ.

Stage I - In stage I, cancer has formed and spread beyond the innermost lining of the rectum to the second and third layers and involves the inside wall of the rectum. At this stage, the cancer has not spread to the outer wall of the rectum or outside the rectum.

Stage II - In stage II, cancer has spread outside the rectum to nearby tissue, but it has not gone into the lymph nodes. The lymph nodes are small, bean-shaped structures found throughout the body that filter substances in a fluid called lymph and help fight infection and disease.

Stage III - In stage III, cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes, but it has not spread to other parts of the body.

Stage IV - In stage IV, cancer has spread to other parts of the body, such as the liver, lungs or ovaries.

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