

# Decreasing cancer risk associated with inflammatory bowel disease

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Inflammatory bowel disease is caused by chronic inflammation, which leads to damage of the intestinal epithelium.

Patients with [inflammatory bowel disease](#) have an elevated risk for developing colorectal cancer because of this [chronic inflammation](#).

In an effort to develop strategies to break the cycle of inflammation, Dr. Brent Polk and colleagues at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles examined two mouse models of colorectal cancer.

Their work shows that inactivating a key receptor, known as epidermal growth factor receptor, increases the frequency and severity of colorectal tumors.

Though epidermal growth factor has well-defined roles in promoting tumor growth, the Polk team now finds that epidermal growth factor receptor can ameliorate the response to chronic inflammation and reduces tumor development by fine-tuning inflammation and the generation of intestinal epithelium.

Their results suggest that promoting epidermal growth factor activity in patients with inflammatory bowel disease could decrease long-term [cancer risk](#) by reducing inflammation.

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