

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal Cancer begins in the colon or rectum and is the second leading type of cancer that kills both men and women. The cancer usually begins with the growth of polyps in the colon or rectum that can become cancerous if left unchecked.

Being proactive in getting the recommended colon cancer screenings based upon your personal risk can help with an early diagnosis. Survival rates are above 90% if colorectal cancer is detected early and treated properly.

The recommended age for men and women to schedule their first colon cancer screening is now 45. According to the American Cancer Society, this change was made because the rates of colorectal cancer in people younger than 50 were increasing.

With less than 70% of adults up-to-date on their colorectal cancer screenings, it is important to know what your risk factors are and what screening options may be available to you. Any questions about your risk factors should be brought to your primary care provider.

What Should You know

If you are between the ages of 45 and 70, discuss your risk factors with your primary care provider. If your health care provider determines you to have an average risk, you may have options available to you for your screening. If you are considered high-risk because of symptoms or your medical history, you should be scheduled for a colonoscopy.

Average Risk

- No prior colorectal cancer or polyps
- No symptoms of colorectal cancer
- No family history of colorectal cancer

High Risk

- **Current symptoms**
 - ◇ Rectal Bleeding
 - ◇ Anemia
 - ◇ Change in bowel habits
 - ◇ Persistent abdominal pain
 - ◇ Unintentional weight loss
- **Personal Medical History**
 - ◇ Previously removed pre-cancerous colorectal polyps
 - ◇ Previously had colorectal cancer
 - ◇ Previous diagnosis of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- **Family History**
 - ◇ Colorectal cancer or precancerous polyps in a first-degree relative diagnosed before the age of 60
 - ◇ Colorectal cancer or precancerous polyps diagnosed in multiple first-degree relatives.
 - ◇ Family history of inherited colorectal cancer syndrome

Compare Your Options

	Colonoscopy Procedure	DNA Stool Test (Cologuard®)
What is it?	A procedure performed under anesthesia where a scope is used to look for and remove abnormal growths in the colon/rectum.	An at-home kit is provided to collect your own stool sample to be sent to a lab to test for abnormal DNA and/or blood.
Who should consider this option?	Any adult at average to high risk of colorectal cancer.	Adults 45 or older who have an average risk of colorectal cancer.
How often does it need to be performed?	Current recommendation is every 10 years or more frequently based on risk factors.	If using only Cologuard® for screening, it is recommended every 3 years.
How invasive is it?	This is a surgical procedure and is considered minimally invasive.	This is done at home and is not invasive at all.
How do patients prepare to use it?	A full bowel prep is required including special diet, fasting, and laxatives.	No prep is necessary.
How long does it take?	The bowel prep required along with the procedure will require 1-2 days.	Length of time is based on how long it takes to collect the sample.
Does insurance cover this?	Most insurers cover it as part of a standard screening.	Most insurers cover it.
What if the results show something?	Polyps found during the procedure are removed and tested for abnormalities.	A colonoscopy would be required.

***Data and information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website was used to create this handout.*