

Putting colorectal cancer to the test



The links between diet, weight, and exercise and the risk of developing colorectal cancer are some of the strongest for any type of cancer¹

Prevention and early detection

Studies suggest that consuming a diet low in animal fats and high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains reduces the risk of colorectal cancers, as can increasing physical activity, limiting alcohol consumption, and avoiding tobacco. Along with these healthy behaviors, the most effective way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is to routinely get screened to find it early, when treatment works the best.²

People at average risk of developing colorectal cancer should start undergoing screening at the age of 45. Those in good health who expect to live at least 10 years longer should continue getting screened regularly until they're 75. After that, people should ask their doctor if they need to pursue screening based on their specific health, preferences, life expectancy, and screening history, although those older than 85 no longer need to get screened.³

Different options to choose from

You can choose from several screening tests to find polyps or colorectal cancer.⁴ Check out these options, consider your preferences, medical condition, and likelihood you'll get the test, and then talk to your doctor about the right one for you:

Test types	How it works	Administration	Frequency	Direct risk to colon (Y/N)	Bowel prep (Y/N)	Home sampling (Y/N)	Pretest diet/med changes	Sedation (Y/N)	Limitation
Stool tests									
gFOBT	Uses the chemical guaiac to detect blood in the stool	A test kit from your healthcare provider	1 / y	N	N	Y	Y	N	May miss many polyps and some cancers
FIT	Uses antibodies to detect blood in the stool	A test kit from your healthcare provider	1 / y	N	N	Y	N	N	May miss many polyps and some cancers
FIT-DNA	Looks for abnormal DNA	An entire bowel movement sent to a lab	1 / 3 y	N	N	Y	N	N	May miss many polyps and some cancers
Visual exams									
Colonoscopy	Uses a colonoscope to view the entire length of the colon and rectum	The insertion of a long, thin, flexible, lighted tube into the rectum	1 / 10 y	Y (small)	Y	N	Y	Y	Can miss small polyps
CT colonoscopy	Produces images of the entire colon for analysis	An advanced type of CT scan	1 / 5 y	Y (small)	Y	N	N	N	Can miss small polyps; exposes the body to a small amount of radiation
Flexible sigmoidoscopy	Uses a colonoscope to view the rectum and lower third of the colon	The insertion of a short, thin, flexible, lighted tube into the rectum	1 / y	Y (small)	N	N	N	N	Doesn't examine the entire colon

References

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