



# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

## Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives

### Know Before You Go

Screening for colorectal cancer is recommended for men and women beginning at age 50.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that adults aged 50-75 be screened for colorectal cancer. Several different screening tests can be used to find polyps or colorectal cancer.

#### Types of screening tests are:

- **Stool Tests**
  - **Guaiac-based Fecal Occult Blood Test (gFOBT)** (once a year)
  - **Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)** (once a year)
  - **FIT-DNA (or Stool DNA test)** (once every one or three years)
- **Flexible Sigmoidoscopy** (every five years, or every 10 years with a FIT every year)
- **Colonoscopy** (every 10 years)
- **CT Colonography** (every five years)

The benefits and risks of these screening methods vary. Discuss with your doctor which test is best for you. And check with your insurance provider to find out which tests are covered by your insurance plan, and how much you will have to pay. **Getting screened could save your life!**

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Do I need to get a screening test for colorectal cancer?

- What screening test(s) do you recommend for me?

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- How do I prepare? Do I need to change my diet or my usual medication schedule?

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- What's involved in the test? Will it be uncomfortable or painful? Is there any risk involved? When and from whom will I get results?
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- If you're having a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy you will want to know: Who will do the exam? Will I need someone with me?
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**You may be at increased risk if:** You have inflammatory bowel disease; a personal or family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer; or genetic syndromes like familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (also known as Lynch syndrome). People at increased risk for colorectal cancer may need earlier or more frequent tests than other people. If you think you may be at increased risk, speak with your doctor about when to start screening, which test is right for you, and how often you should be tested.

**If you're having symptoms:** Tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms:

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement).
- Pain, aches, or cramps in your stomach that do not go away.
- Losing weight and you don't know why.

These symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know what is causing them is to see your doctor.



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/screenforlife](http://www.cdc.gov/screenforlife)  
1-800-CDC-INFO