

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?

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

- 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?

- If you're having a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy you will want to know: Who will do the exam? Will I need someone with me?

If you're at increased risk: Some people are at increased risk because they 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). These people may need to start screening earlier than age 50. If you believe you are at increased risk, ask your doctor if you should begin screening earlier than age 50.

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

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement).
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps 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 speak with your doctor about them.