

Screening for colorectal cancer Don't wait—50's great



Want to learn more?

www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/colorectalancer

50

Screening for colorectal cancer is recommended beginning at age 50.

1 in 2

But only one-half of adults have gotten a screening test in their early 50s (age 50–54).

6

There are six different screening tests, some that can be done either at home or in a clinic, that can prevent or detect cancer early.

Overview:

Colorectal cancer is the #2 cancer killer of both men and women in the US. But colorectal cancer is a preventable disease. Colorectal cancer starts with a precancerous polyp (abnormal growth) in the colon, which can be removed without surgery. The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends that adults of average risk begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 50. While screening increases as people get older, national targets for screening have not been met. Adults are likely to get screened when healthcare providers talk to them about their options. Adults ages 50–75 should talk to their doctor about when they should be screened.



PROBLEM:

Not starting screening at 50

Question: What if I don't have any symptoms?

Answer: Colorectal cancer often doesn't cause symptoms early on.

Question: Is the test unpleasant or embarrassing?

Answer: There are several kinds of tests that can be done in the clinic or at home. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best option for you.

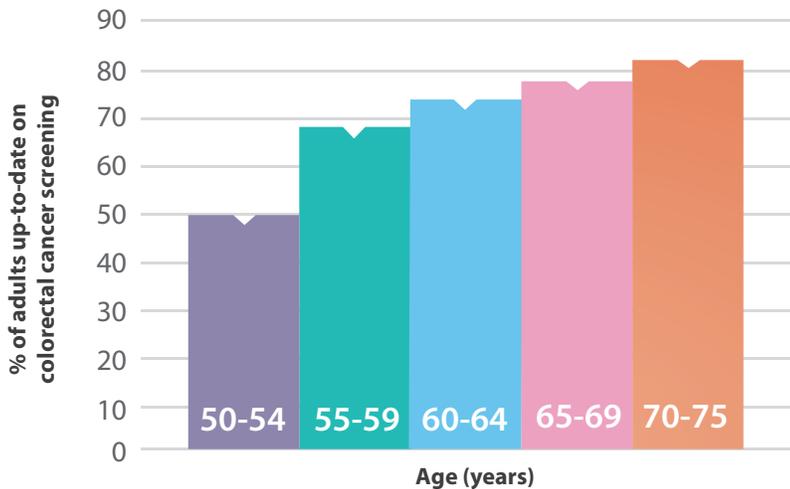
Question: Do I need to be screened if no one in my family had colorectal cancer?

Answer: Yes. Family history can put you at higher risk, but most colorectal cancers happen in people with no family history.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

People in their early 50s delay getting their first colorectal cancer screening test

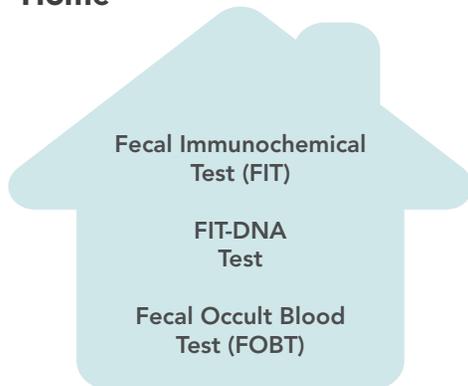


SOURCE: CDC 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

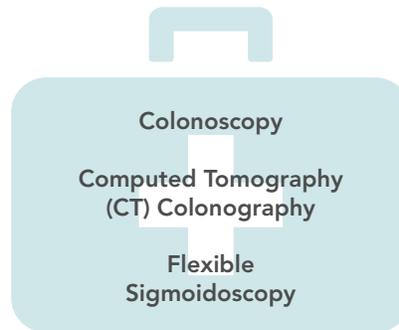
Many screening test options are available

There may be some preparation involved prior to your test.

Home



Outpatient



SOURCE: CDC Vital Signs, March 2020.



If you're going to be 50 years old soon or if you're in your 50s now and haven't been screened yet—don't wait to prevent colorectal cancer.

Take the time for your health. Talk to your doctor about the best test for you based on your preferences—then get that test done.

THE WAY FORWARD >>>

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAN:

- Take advantage of any medical visit to tell patients they need to get screened starting at 50.
- Let patients know that there is more than one test option that can be done in the clinic or at home.
- Offer recommended test options with advice about each.
- Use reminder systems to notify patients when to get a test done and if they need follow-up tests.

EVERYONE CAN:

- Learn about the six different screening test options.
- Talk to your doctor about the best test for you based on your preferences.
- Find out if you're at higher risk than most people because of family history or other reasons.
- Ask about which tests are covered by insurance.
- Don't wait: Use age 50 as your time to start screening to prevent colorectal cancer or find it early, when treatments work best.

For more information

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Web: www.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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