

Colon Health Prevention Screenings



Screening Recommendations

Regular screening, beginning at age 45, is the key to preventing colorectal cancer and finding it early. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) recommends that adults age 45 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer. The Task Force recommends that adults age 76 to 85 talk to their doctor about screening.

The Task Force recommends several colorectal cancer screening strategies, including:

Stool tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, and CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy). The FIT-DNA test (also referred to as the stool DNA test) combines the FIT with a test that detects altered DNA in the stool. For this test, you will collect a sample and send it to the lab, where it is checked for altered DNA and for the presence of blood. It is done once every three years if normal results are found.



When Should I Begin to Get Screened?

Most people should begin screening for colorectal cancer soon after turning 45, then continue getting screened at regular intervals. However, you may need to be tested earlier than 45, or more often than other people, if you have:

- Inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.
- A personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps.

If you think you are at increased risk for colorectal cancer, speak with your doctor about:

- When to begin screening.
- Which test is right for you.
- How often to get tested.

How do I know which screening is right for me?

Each test has advantages and disadvantages. Talk to your doctor about the pros and cons of each test, and how often to be tested.

- Your preferences.
- Your medical condition.
- Your personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps.