



Is it time for your colon cancer screening?

Getting screened for colon cancer is one of the best things you can do for your health. Here are answers to questions people ask about it.



What is colon cancer?

Colon cancer begins with a small growth in the lining of the rectum or large intestine. Over time, it can turn into cancer. Colon cancer is the third leading cause of death. Finding it early is important. That's when it's easiest to care for.



What signs of colon cancer should I watch for?

Common signs are:

- Blood in the stool
- Bleeding from the rectum
- Change in bowel habits
- Stomach cramping or pain
- Not interested in eating
- Weight loss without trying
- Weakness

Many people may not see or feel any signs right away. That's why it's important to get screened.



When should I get screened?

If you are:

- Age 45 or younger and have a family member with colon cancer: ask your doctor when to get screened.
- Ages 45 to 75: Make sure you schedule the screenings you need.
- Ages 76 to 85: Talk to your doctor about your chances of having colon cancer and what to do.



How do I keep from getting colon cancer?

There's a lot you can do to lower your chances of getting colon cancer. You can:

- Make sure you schedule the screenings you need
- Be active
- Eat healthy
- Limit your use of tobacco
- Limit your use of alcohol



How do you screen for colon cancer?

There are two ways to get screened:

- A test you can take at home. You collect a stool sample and mail it to a lab.
- An exam in a doctor's office or clinic. This is a visual exam of the rectum and colon. It's called a colonoscopy.

The type of test or exam you do helps determine when you need future screenings.



How do I prepare for a colon cancer screening?

You don't need to prepare for the home test. For the visual exam (colonoscopy), you may need to limit what you eat for a few days. Or you may need to have only clear liquids. You'll take a medicine the day before to clear out your colon.



How can I learn more about colon cancer screening?

Ask your doctor what type of screening is best for you. The most important thing is to get screened. You can also call the National Cancer Institute at **1-800-4-CANCER** (1-800-422-6237). Or visit **cancer.org**.

*Resources:

National Association for Continence: <https://www.nafc.org> Urology

Care Foundation: <https://www.UrologyHealth.org> 1

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