

# Information about Colon Cancer Screening



**PROM-IS**  
PROMOTING INDIVIDUALIZED SCREENING



## *What is* **colon cancer**?

**Colon cancer** is a medical condition where a tumor or growth forms in the lining of the colon, part of the digestive system where stool or poop is made.



## What is colon cancer screening?

Screening is when we look for colon cancer or colon polyps in someone who doesn't have any symptoms.

*Colon cancer screening tests look for colon cancer or polyps before you have problems.*

If we find colon cancer at an early stage before symptoms start, it's usually curable. If we detect it at a later stage, after symptoms have already started (like blood in the stool or belly pain), it's a lot harder to treat.

## How do you **screen** for colon cancer?

There are two main ways to screen for colon cancer: colonoscopy and stool tests.

### **1. Colonoscopy**

A colonoscopy is a type of screening test where doctors insert a flexible tube into the colon to look for cancer or polyps. To get a colonoscopy, you first need to drink a "prep" solution to clean out your colon the day before the procedure. This prep works by causing severe diarrhea, which is what cleans you out.

### **2. Stool Test**

A stool test (also known as a stool card or vial, or "FOBT") requires you to put a small sample of stool or poop on a paper card or into a vial. This card or vial is sent back to the hospital, where it is tested in the laboratory for small amounts of blood.

*If you decide to get screened, your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you.*

## **Who** should be screened for colon cancer?

Current guidelines recommend that adults between ages 50 and 75 should consider getting screened for colon cancer.

*Talk to your doctor about whether you should get screened.*





This project was supported by VA Health Services Research and Development (IIR 12-411-2 and CDA 09-213-2) and conducted by the VA Center for Clinical Management Research (CCMR) in Ann Arbor, Michigan.