

Title:

New At-Home Test Aids In Cancer Screening

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

There's encouraging news for the millions of Americans at risk for colon cancer. A new, easy-to-use fecal occult blood test (FOBT) is available for at-home screening and is designed specifically to detect colon cancer at its earliest stages.

Hemoccult ICT is a new, safe and affordable FOBT screening option for colon cancer-the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States. Despite its high incidence, colon cancer is a highly treatable cancer, with a 90 percent survival rate when detected early. Unfortunately, only half of the more than 80 million Americans over age 50 have been screened for colon cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends annual screening with a FOBT for both men and women beginning at age 50. Annual colon cancer screening with FOBT has been proven to decrease mortality by 33 percent when compared with no screening. Because colon cancer can take three to 10 years or longer to develop in the average patient, it is important to begin screening prior to developing symptoms.

FOBT vs. Colonoscopy

For years colonoscopy has been the most well-known test in colon cancer screening. While widely regarded as the gold standard, colonoscopy does have some drawbacks:

- Colonoscopy costs between \$300 and \$1,000, and while covered by insurance for many, millions of Americans lack health insurance.

- Standard colonoscopy can be overwhelming for some people due to the fact

that the procedure is usually done under sedation, and because patients are required to follow a special diet and take a very strong laxative before the exam.

• Due to a limited number of trained professionals and the equipment needed to perform the tests, the maximum number of colonoscopies that can be performed in the United States each year can accommodate only a quarter of the Americans in need of screening.

Unlike other available FOBTs, the new Hemoccult ICT has no drug or dietary restrictions-allowing people to begin testing at their convenience. If a test comes back positive, a follow-up colonoscopy typically is recommended.