

Did You Know...

- **Colon cancer can be prevented. Get tested!**
- **Screening tests can find colon cancer early when treatment works best, or before cancer starts.**

Not insured?

If you don't have insurance, you may still be able to get screened. The New York State Cancer Services Program offers free colon cancer screening for eligible, uninsured New York residents in every county and borough.

Contact your local Cancer Services Program or call

1-866-442-CANCER (2262)

to find a program near you.

Get the Facts about Colon Cancer



- **Colon cancer or polyps may not cause symptoms, especially early on. Don't wait for symptoms before you get tested.**
- **You can lower your risk for colon cancer. Eat healthy, exercise, maintain a healthy weight, drink in moderation, and don't smoke.**

You should also consider enrolling in a health plan through the New York State of Health. For more information call the help line at **855.355.5777** or visit: nystateofhealth.ny.gov

Colon cancer is the **#2 cause of cancer deaths** among New Yorkers, but it doesn't have to be.

Colon cancer can be prevented.

All men and women 50 years and older should be tested for colon cancer.



Department
of Health



Cancer Services
Program

What is Colon Cancer?

Colon cancer (also called colorectal cancer) is cancer that starts in the colon or rectum. The colon and rectum are part of the body's digestive system.

Abnormal growths (called polyps) begin in the colon or rectum and over time can become cancer.



Why Get Screened?

Colon cancer screening tests can find polyps so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

Screening tests can also find colon cancer early, when treatment may be most effective.

Who Should Get Tested for Colon Cancer?

Men and women ages 50 to 75 years should get colon cancer screening tests. After age 75, ask your health care provider if you should be tested.

Risk for colon cancer increases with age. More than 90% of colon cancers occur in people age 50 years or older.

Some people should get tested earlier than age 50. Talk to your health care provider if:

- You or a family member has had colon cancer or polyps
- You or a family member has had inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), including Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis
- You have a genetic syndrome, such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or Lynch syndrome

How Can I Get Tested for Colon Cancer?

There is more than one test for colon cancer. You have a choice!

Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) or Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

You do these tests at home and send stool samples to a doctor's office or lab.

Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is done in a doctor's office or other medical setting. The doctor looks for growths or cancer in the rectum and colon.

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

A colonoscopy is done in a doctor's office or other medical setting. The doctor looks for growths or cancer in the rectum and lower third of the colon.

The best test is the test that gets done.

Talk to your health care provider and choose the one that's right for YOU.

What are the Symptoms of Colon Cancer?

Colon cancer may not cause symptoms. A person could have colon cancer and not know it.

If there are symptoms, they can include:

- Blood in stool or tar-like stools
- Pain or cramps in your stomach that do not go away
- Change in bowel movement habits – either constipation or diarrhea
- Losing weight and you don't know why

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your health care provider.