

# Colon Cancer Screening Options for Adults

## 45-75 Years Old

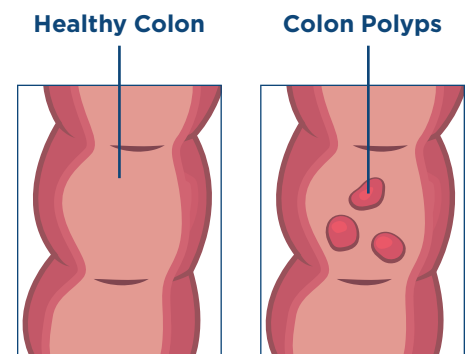
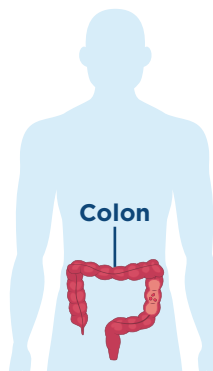


## What Is Colorectal Cancer (also known as “colon cancer”)?

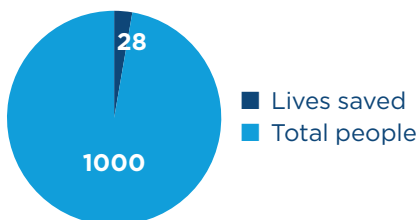
- Colon cancer starts off as a polyp in the colon. Polyps are abnormal growths in the colon.
- Colon cancer is the 2nd leading cancer killer in the United States.
- The picture below shows what a colon looks like and how a polyp can grow in the colon.

### How can I lower my chance of dying from colon cancer?

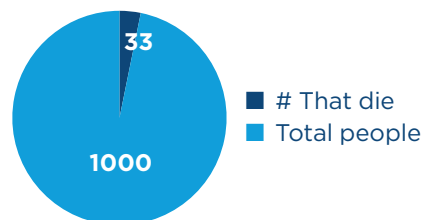
- Screening can often find colon cancer early, when it’s small, hasn’t spread, and might be easier to treat.
- Regular screening can even prevent colon cancer. A polyp can take as many as 10 to 15 years to develop into cancer.



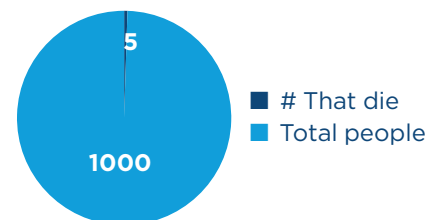
**Screening saves 28 lives out of 1,000 people** when comparing those who do get screened to those that do NOT get screened.



**33 out of 1,000 people NOT screened die from colon cancer** in their lifetime.



**5 out of 1,000 people screened die from colon cancer** in their lifetime.



**Reference:** [uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening](https://uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening)

### Asking your doctor these questions may help you decide about colon cancer screening.

- What are my risk factors for colon cancer?
- What screening test(s) is right for me?
- What is involved in the test?
- Will the test be uncomfortable or painful?
- Are there any risks involved?
- When and from whom will I get results?
- What happens if the screening test comes back positive?

## Different Colon Cancer Screening Tests: Which Is Right For Me?

	Stool Blood Test	Stool DNA Test (example: Cologuard)	Colonoscopy
 <b>How does it work?</b>	A stool-based fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is used to find tiny amounts of blood in the stool. This can be a sign of cancer or large polyps. For this test, people use a take-home kit to collect a stool sample and mail it to a lab.	Stool DNA testing looks for certain DNA or gene changes in cells that can get into the stool from polyps (pre-cancerous growths) or cancer cells. It may also check for blood in the stool. For this test, people use a take-home kit to collect a stool sample and mail it to a lab.	The patient is given medicine to sleep. A doctor then uses a scope to find and take out abnormal growths in the colon. This test is done at an outpatient surgical center or hospital. Must be scheduled in advance.
 <b>Who is it for?</b>	The average adult	The average adult	Adults who have an average chance of getting colon cancer and those with a higher chance of getting colon cancer.
 <b>How often? *</b>	If normal, every year	If normal, every 1-3 years	If normal, every 10 years
 <b>Prep required?</b>	No	No	The day prior to the procedure you can't eat anything solid and can only take-in clear (see-through) liquids. The night before the colonoscopy you'll take strong laxatives to clear your colon.
 <b>Time it takes?</b>	The time it takes to collect a sample	The time it takes to collect a sample	1 day for bowel prep and 1 day for the test. You will likely need to take a day off from work on day of test.
 <b>After an abnormal result?</b>	Follow-up with a colonoscopy	Follow-up with a colonoscopy	Polyps taken out and examined
 <b>Any harms?</b>	No	No	Small chance of bleeding and 1/10,000 chance of a tear in the large intestine.

\* For adults who have a higher chance of colon cancer, testing may be more frequent and should be discussed with your healthcare provider.

**Health insurance covers the cost of colorectal cancer screening. Consult with your insurance plan for more information about your specific coverage.**

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) does not recommend any of the above specific screening tests over the others. You should decide with your healthcare provider based on your medical history, your family history, and personal preferences such as convenience and how often you want to be screened.

**Below are some things to think about when deciding on colon cancer screening. Please circle from 1 (Uncomfortable for me) to 10 (Comfortable for me) to mark your level of comfort.**

### 1. Please indicate your level of comfort with handling your stool.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Uncomfortable for me

Comfortable for me

### 2. What is your level of comfort with prepping for a colonoscopy?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Uncomfortable for me

Comfortable for me

**PLEASE USE THIS TOOL TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT COLON CANCER SCREENING.**

**Resources:** [cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html](https://cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html)  
[cancer.org/latest-news/understanding-tests-that-screen-for-colon-cancer.html](https://cancer.org/latest-news/understanding-tests-that-screen-for-colon-cancer.html)