SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

In 2021, the American College of Gastroenterology updated its colorectal cancer screening guideline. Important recommendations from the authors of guideline are summarized here.*

We recommend colorectal cancer screening in average-risk individuals between age 45 and 75 years to reduce pre-cancerous growths called advanced adenomas, reduce colorectal cancer, and reduce death from colorectal cancer.

We suggest that a decision to continue screening beyond age 75 years be personalized.

We recommend colonoscopy and FIT as the primary methods for colorectal cancer screening.

We suggest considering the following screening tests for individuals unable or unwilling to undergo a colonoscopy or FIT test: Flexible Sigmoidoscopy, Multitarget Stool DNA test, CT Colonography, or Colon Capsule.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY FOR DIFFERENT SCREENING TESTS

We recommend the following tests as the primary screening methods for patients at average risk for colorectal cancer on this schedule:

- Colonoscopy every ten years
- FIT every one year

If one of these alternatives is used, we suggest that the tests be done on this schedule:

- Multitarget stool DNA test every three years
- CT colonography every five years
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 to 10 years
- Colon Capsule every five years

We suggest against Septin9 (blood-based test) for colorectal cancer screening.

SCREENING FOR PATIENTS WITH FAMILY HISTORY OF COLORECTAL CANCER OR POLyps

For individuals with a family history of colorectal cancer:

- If you have family history of colon cancer, you may need to talk with your health care provider to see if earlier and more frequent colonoscopy is required.
- Sometimes, genetic testing may be required to determine your risk of colon cancer if you have a strong family history, especially with younger age of affected relatives.

*Shaukat, et al., American College of Gastroenterology Guideline on Colorectal Cancer Screening, The American Journal of Gastroenterology, March 2021

To read the ACG 2021 Colorectal Cancer Screening Guideline visit bit.ly/ACG2021-CRC-Guideline

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To learn more visit gi.org/coloncancer
- To find a gastroenterologist near you gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist
Age 45 is now recommended as the time to start screening for colorectal cancer among all average risk adults according to the American College of Gastroenterology.

**AN IMPORTANT CHANGE**

This is an important change from earlier guidelines that used to recommend starting at age 50 for most people and age 45 for African Americans only. Now "45 is the new 50" to start screening for everyone at average risk for colorectal cancer.

YOU CAN PREVENT COLORECTAL CANCER

With screening, your gastroenterologist can diagnose colorectal cancers at an earlier stage, find colon polyps early so they can be safely removed, and help to prevent colorectal cancer.

DON'T PUT OFF PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Do not put off needed health care, especially preventive tests. Remember, the most common symptom of early colorectal cancer is NO symptom, so it is important to get screened.

NEVER IGNORE NEW OR WORRYING SYMPTOMS

It is important to reach out to your health care providers if you have any symptoms REGARDLESS of age. Do not hesitate to talk to your health team about new or worrying bowel symptoms, even those that seem hard to discuss or share, including:

- Blood in the stool
- Change in bowel habits
- Change in the shape and size of stool
- Rectal pain
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained or new anemia

LEARN ABOUT YOUR SCREENING OPTIONS

FOR COLORECTAL CANCER

One-Step Screening Test: Colonoscopy

Positive Test?

1-Step Test

1st Step: Stool-Based Test

FIT Test

FIT Test (Fecal Immunochemical Test) or Multitarget Stool DNA

Other FIT Test Options: Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

Medicare Pays for Colonoscopy

Two-Step Screening Tests

FIT Test

FIT Test (Fecal Immunochemical Test) or Multitarget Stool DNA

Tests for Individuals who Cannot or Will Not Have a Colonoscopy or FIT, or Are Not Candidates for Colonoscopy

CT Colonography and Colon Capsule

At this time, CT colonography and colon capsule are options for individuals unwilling or unable to undergo colonoscopy or FIT, provided that the tests are locally available and reimbursed by insurers for screening. It is important to note that both tests will still require a follow-up colonoscopy if positive.

NEW AGE TO START SCREENING

New research suggests that colorectal cancer is more common among adults aged 45 to 50. It is important to start screening at this age to detect and prevent colorectal cancer at an earlier stage.