

Colorectal cancer screening

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC), not counting some kinds of skin cancer, colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in men and women in the U.S. and the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths.¹ When colorectal cancers are found early and properly treated, about nine out of every 10 patients are still living five years later.²

The risk of developing colorectal cancer rises with age. It is estimated that 13% of new colorectal cancer cases occur in people younger than 50 years.² For this reason, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends yearly colorectal screening for persons of average risk beginning at age 45 and continuing to age 75.

They also recommend that adults aged 76 to 85 years talk with their doctor about screening.³ Your overall health status and previous medical history can help you and your doctor determine your screening approach.

Several tests are available to screen for colorectal cancer⁴:

Stool (poop)	Tests to check for blood – your doctor may recommend an at-home test for this
Colonoscopy	A lighted flexible scope to view the colon and rectum
Flexible sigmoidoscopy	A thin, flexible scope to view the rectum and lower colon only
CT colonography	Also called a virtual colonoscopy, this test is a series of images that show the inside colon lining

If anything unusual is found during a screening test other than the colonoscopy option, you will likely be advised to have a colonoscopy for further evaluation. In addition to visualizing the entire colon during a colonoscopy, polyps can be removed, and abnormal tissue can be biopsied for further evaluation.

45 YEARS OF AGE

In May of 2021, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force lowered its recommended age for colorectal cancer screenings from 50 to 45.

Talk to your doctor about what is best for you

There are differences in the recommended frequency of testing and in the risks and benefits with each screening option. Talk with your doctor about which screening option is right for you.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/statistics/

² Source: American Cancer Society <https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.3322/caac.21772>

³ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening#citation3

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/screening/tests.htm