

COLON CANCER SCREENING

Colon cancer screening can be done with an easy at-home test or by colonoscopy, depending on your level of risk for colon cancer.



Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is cancer of the large intestine (colon), which is the final part of your digestive tract. Usually, colon cancer begins as small, non-cancerous growths called polyps. Polyps can become cancer over time.

Know Your Risk



You're at **average risk** for colon cancer if you are between the ages of 50-74 and have no family history of colon cancer.



You're at **increased risk** if you have a family history of colon cancer in one or more immediate family members (parent, sibling or child).

Prevention

Getting tested regularly for colon cancer is an important step in protecting your health.

Colon cancer screening can help detect colon cancer early, when it is easier to treat. Regular testing can also find polyps that may turn into cancer if not removed.



Get Tested

If you are at **average risk** and don't have any signs or symptoms of colon cancer, you can get checked for colon cancer with an at-home test, called the fecal immunochemical test (FIT).

If you are at **increased risk** for colon cancer, you can get tested with a colonoscopy.

At-Home Test

The at-home test for colon cancer is simple and only takes a few minutes to do. You can do the test without changing your diet or pausing your medications.

- 1 Talk to your healthcare provider about getting an at-home test.
- 2 Your test will be mailed to you after your healthcare provider orders it.
- 3 Complete the test by taking a single sample of stool (poop), as instructed on the test.
- 4 Return your completed test to LifeLabs or talk to your local health service about drop-off options.
- 5 Your test results will be mailed to you. If your result is normal, you should test again in 2 years.

When to Get a Colonoscopy



A colonoscopy is an exam where a healthcare provider looks at the lining of your colon using a long, flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end.

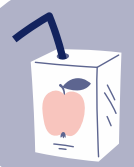
If your parent, sibling or child has been diagnosed with colon cancer, you are at increased risk for colon cancer. You should get checked regularly by colonoscopy.

You should start getting a colonoscopy at **age 50** or 10 years earlier than the age your relative was diagnosed with colon cancer.

Colonoscopy Procedure

A colonoscopy usually takes about 30-45 minutes, but may take longer.

Before your procedure you may need to:



follow a liquid diet for 1-2 days



take a laxative or have an enema to clear the colon

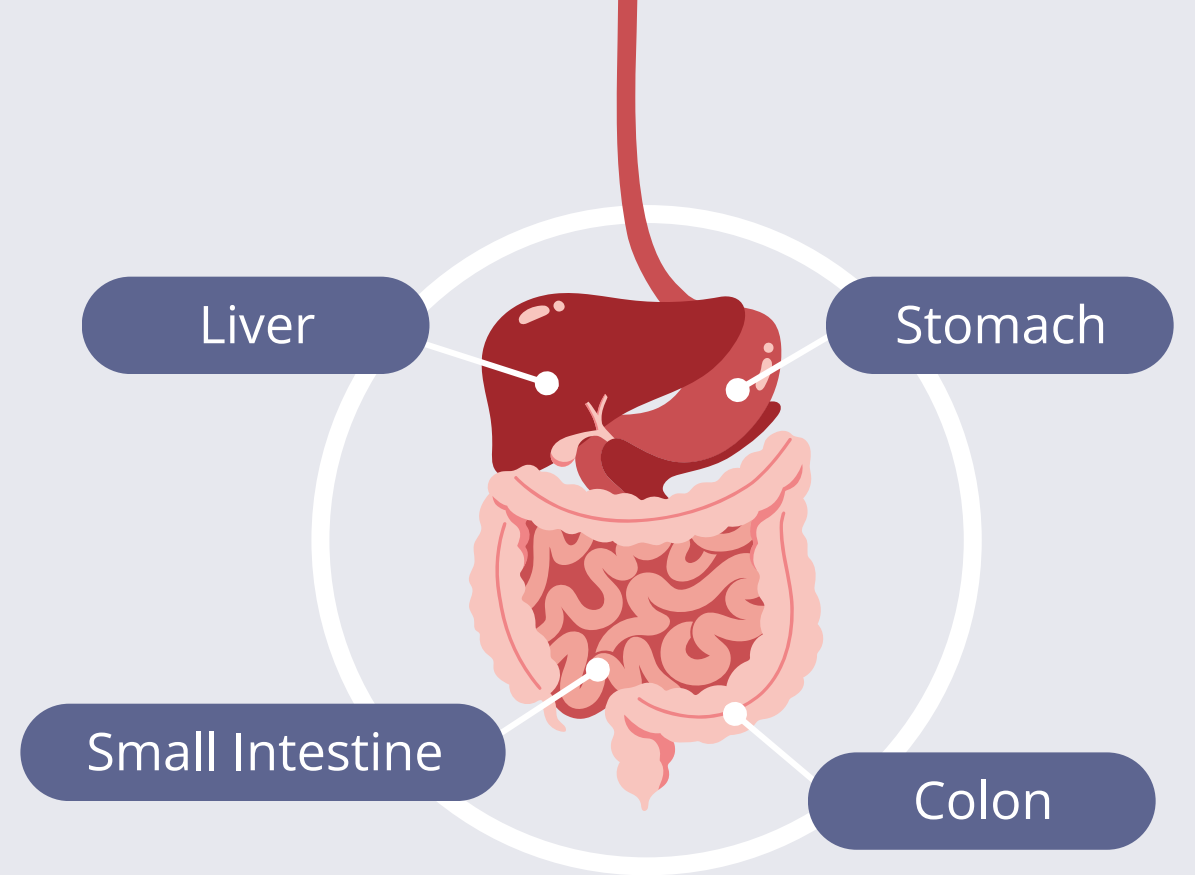
You can expect the following during your colonoscopy exam:

1 An IV may be put in your arm to give pain medicines or sedation.

2 You'll be asked to lie on your left side with your knees pulled up.

3 A tube will be inserted into the anus and the colon will be inflated with air.

4 The doctor will look at the lining of the colon. Polyps may be removed.



Signs & Symptoms

Colon cancer may not cause any warning signs or symptoms in its early stages. Many people do not know that they have colon cancer, because they feel fine. Other health conditions can also cause the same symptoms as colon cancer.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you experience any of the following:

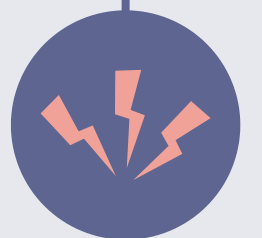
Bright or very dark blood in the stool (poop)



New or persistent diarrhea or constipation

Feeling like the rectum is not completely empty after a bowel movement

Gas, abdominal cramps or feeling bloated



Bleeding from the rectum

Anemia (drop in red blood cell count), which can cause fatigue

Unexplained weight loss

