

# 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.



## At-Home Test

You can do an easy, at-home test for colon cancer, called the fecal immunochemical test (FIT), if you're at average risk for colon cancer.

**Step 1:** talk to a healthcare provider about getting a test. A healthcare provider must order an at-home test for you.

**Step 2:** get a test mailed to you. LifeLabs will mail a test to you, after your healthcare provider has ordered a test for you.

**Step 3:** complete the test. The test only takes a few minutes. You only need one stool (poop) sample and you don't have to change your diet or stop taking your medications ahead of time.

**Step 4:** return your completed test to LifeLabs, as instructed.

**Step 5:** get the results. Results will be mailed to you. Talk to your healthcare provider if you get an abnormal test result. If your result is normal, get checked again in two years.

## Colon Cancer

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

## Know Your Risk

You're at **average risk** if you are aged 50-74 with no family history of colon cancer. Testing can be done at-home, using a FIT test, if you have no signs or symptoms.

You're at **increased risk** if you have a family history of colon cancer in one or more immediate family members. Testing can be done with colonoscopy.

## Prevention

Colon cancer screening can help detect colon cancer early, when it is more likely to be cured. Regular testing can also find polyps that may turn into cancer if left untreated.



# Colonoscopy Procedure

If you are at increased risk for colon cancer, screening can be done by colonoscopy.

During a colonoscopy exam, a doctor looks at the lining of your entire colon using a long, flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end.

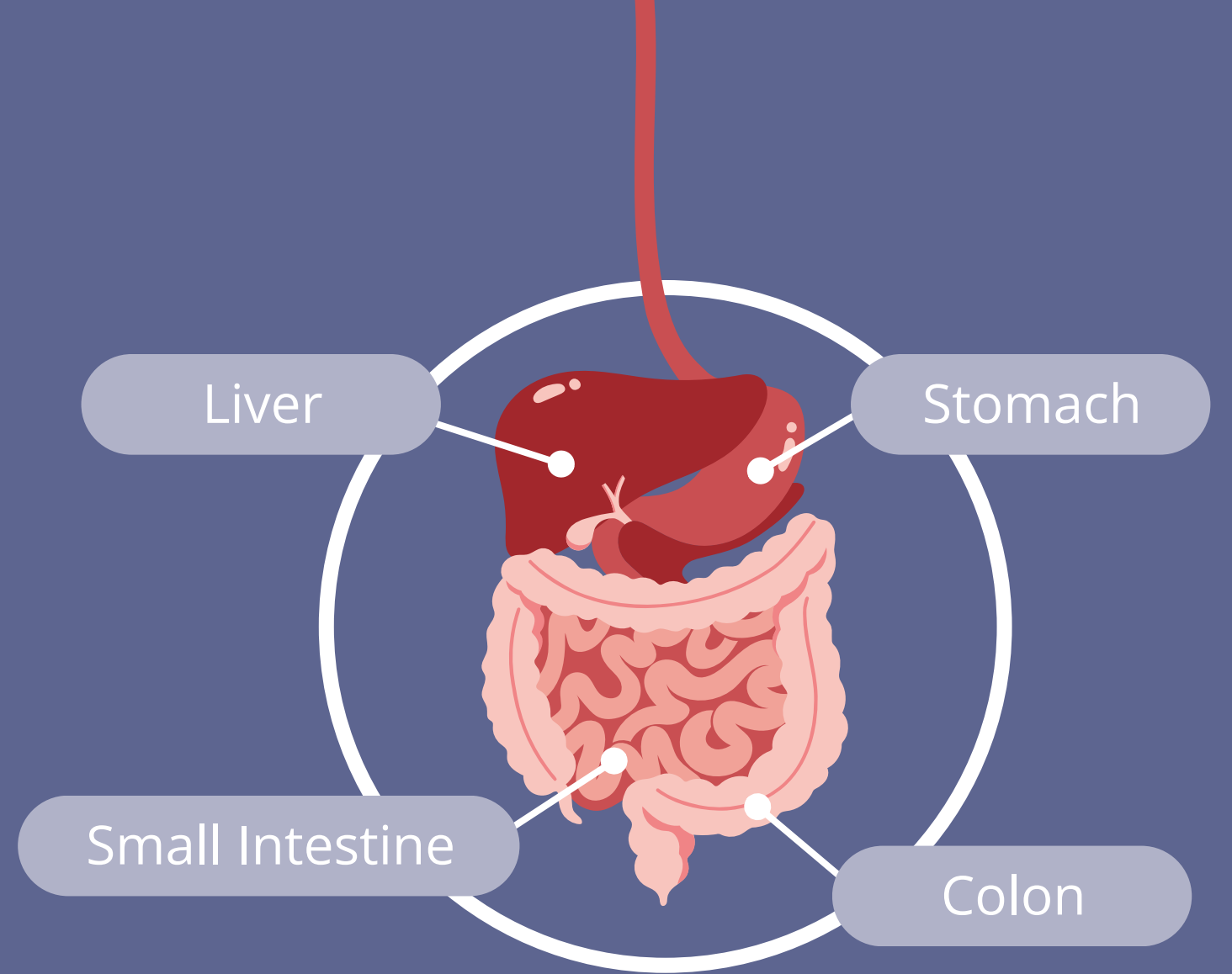
During the colonoscopy, the doctor can also take biopsies (samples of tissues) or remove polyps.

## Results

You will get your colonoscopy results during your colonoscopy appointment from the doctor or nurse practitioner who did your procedure.

If you have a normal colonoscopy result, your healthcare provider will let you know when you need to be screened for colon cancer again.

If you have an abnormal colonoscopy result, your healthcare provider will talk to you about next steps, which may include further testing or treatment.



## Symptoms of Colon Cancer

Colon cancer may not cause any 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:

- blood (either very dark or bright red) in the stool
- new and persistent diarrhea, constipation or feeling that your bowel does not empty all the way
- new and persistent stomach discomfort
- unexplained weight loss
- unexplained anemia (drop in red blood cell count) which can cause fatigue

Colon cancer is easier to treat in its early stages. Getting screened regularly is key.

