

# Colon Cancer Screening

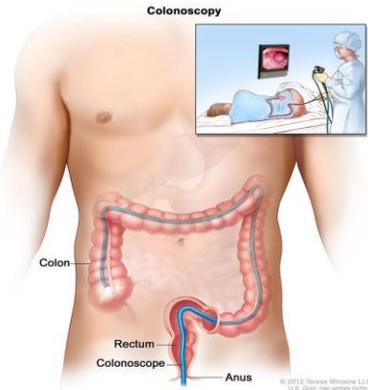
**Colon Cancer:** The colon is the main part of your large intestine. Colon cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related death in the U.S. after breast cancer.

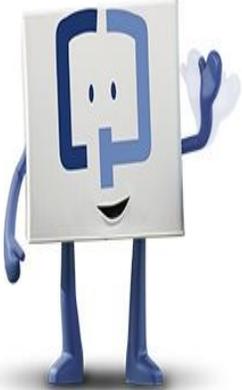
**Symptoms:** blood in the stool, rectal bleeding, dark colored stool, lower stomach cramping, change in shape of stool, unnecessary urge to have a bowel movement, prolonged constipation or diarrhea, and unintentional weight loss

- Most people begin colon cancer screening at age 50. However, some people may need screening at a younger age. Your doctor will recommend when you should start colon cancer screening.

**Screening-** Being screened for colon cancer can help find, and in some cases, remove cancer. There are several different screening tests available (see the list of tests done at Bassett below). Talk with your doctor about which test is best for you.

## Comparisons of Colon Cancer Screening Tests Available at Bassett Healthcare

Test	Picture	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Colonoscopy</b> The Most Effective Screening Test</p> <p><b>How Often:</b> every 10 years</p>		<p><b>Colonoscopy</b> is a procedure to look inside the rectum and colon (parts of the large intestine) for polyps, and early cancer. Polyps are a small clump, or growth in the lining of the rectum or colon.</p> <p>A thin, flexible tube is inserted through the anus into the colon. This tube allows the doctor to see the inside of your colon and even remove polyps, or take samples of areas to test for cancer.</p>	<p>Colonoscopy is the procedure <b>recommended by doctors</b>. If polyps or abnormal areas are found, they can be removed during the procedure, which can prevent, and even cure some cancers.</p> <p>If results are normal, only needs to be repeated every 10 years.</p>	<p>Requires bowel preparation (a laxative and restricted diet) to clean out the colon so the doctor can see better.</p> <p>Problems with colonoscopy are rare (less than 1 in 1,000 cases), but can include tears in the lining of the colon and bleeding.</p> <p>Sedation or anesthesia is used to decrease the discomfort from the procedure.</p>

Test	Picture	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>DNA Stool Testing with FIT</b> (Fecal Immunochemical Test) (<i>Cologuard</i>)</p> <p><b>How Often:</b> every 3 years</p>		<p><b>DNA stool tests</b> check <b>stool</b> (poop) for abnormal DNA. <b>FIT</b> detects blood in the stool.</p> <p>A small sample of stool is placed in a special container and returned to the doctor or laboratory for testing.</p>	<p>DNA Stool Testing can be done at home.</p> <p>No bowel prep needed</p> <p>No change in diet or medications needed</p>	<p>May miss cancers or polyps that are present.</p> <p>Sometimes come out positive when there is no problem (false positive)</p> <p>Must be done every 3 years (instead of every 10 years for colonoscopy).</p>
<p><b>FIT</b> (Fecal Immunochemical Test)</p> <p><b>How Often:</b> every year</p>		<p><b>FIT</b> detects blood in the stool, which can be a sign of polyps, cancer, or other conditions.</p> <p>A small sample of stool is placed in a special container and returned to the doctor or laboratory for testing.</p>	<p>FIT testing can be done at home.</p> <p>No bowel prep needed</p> <p>No change in diet or medications needed</p>	<p>May miss cancers or polyps that are present.</p> <p>Often tests positive when there really isn't any cancer or polyps- (false positive)</p> <p>Must be done every year (instead of every 10 years for colonoscopy).</p>

**There are other colon cancer screening tests available. Talk with your doctor if you would like more options.**

**References:** American Cancer Society // Infographics // 2016; [http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2529486?mc\\_cid=f0be902c78&mc\\_eid=54c96cce97](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2529486?mc_cid=f0be902c78&mc_eid=54c96cce97); National Cancer Institute ([www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)); Medline Plus ([www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)); Lin JS, et al. Screening for Colorectal Cancer: A Systematic Review for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Evidence Synthesis No. 135. AHRQ Publication No. 14-05203-EF-1. Rockville, MD: 2016; Imperiale TF, et al. Multitarget Stool DNA Testing for Colorectal-Cancer Screening. *NEJM* 2014; 370:1287.