

## What happens if the test result is abnormal?

Your doctor or healthcare provider will arrange for you to do the FIT at home. Once you are finished with the test, you bring it to the lab. The test result is then sent to your healthcare provider.

To learn more about the FIT, you can read the brochure *Instructions for the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)* on [www.screeningforlife.ca](http://www.screeningforlife.ca). You can also call 1-866-727-3926.

## What happens if the test result is abnormal?

An abnormal result means there was blood found in the stool. This **doesn't** always mean you have cancer. If the test shows there is blood in your stool, more testing is done to find the cause. Both polyps and hemorrhoids (piles) can cause blood to show in the test.

- The follow-up test for an abnormal FIT result is a colonoscopy. If polyps that can become cancer are found, they are removed.
- If cancer is found, the doctor will speak with you about the next steps and treatment choices.

## Are there any harms or risks to screening?

While the FIT itself doesn't cause any harm, it may miss blood in the stool. A polyp or cancer can also be missed if it wasn't bleeding at the time you did the test. This is why it's important to be screened regularly. Make sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, or a change in your stool pattern.



## About the Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program

The Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program (ACRCSP) is coordinated by Alberta Health Services in partnership with healthcare providers. The ACRCSP mails FIT home stool test result letters to men and women between 50 and 74. The program sends normal and abnormal test result letters throughout Alberta.

To get letters from the ACRCSP your name and address must be up to date with Alberta Health; call 310-0000 (toll-free) then dial 780-427-1432.

Screening is one of the best things you can do for yourself to prevent and find colorectal cancer early. Breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening saves lives.

For more information, please contact  
**Cancer Screening Programs**

Tel: 1-866-727-3926

Fax: 1-888-944-3388

Web: [screeningforlife.ca](http://screeningforlife.ca)

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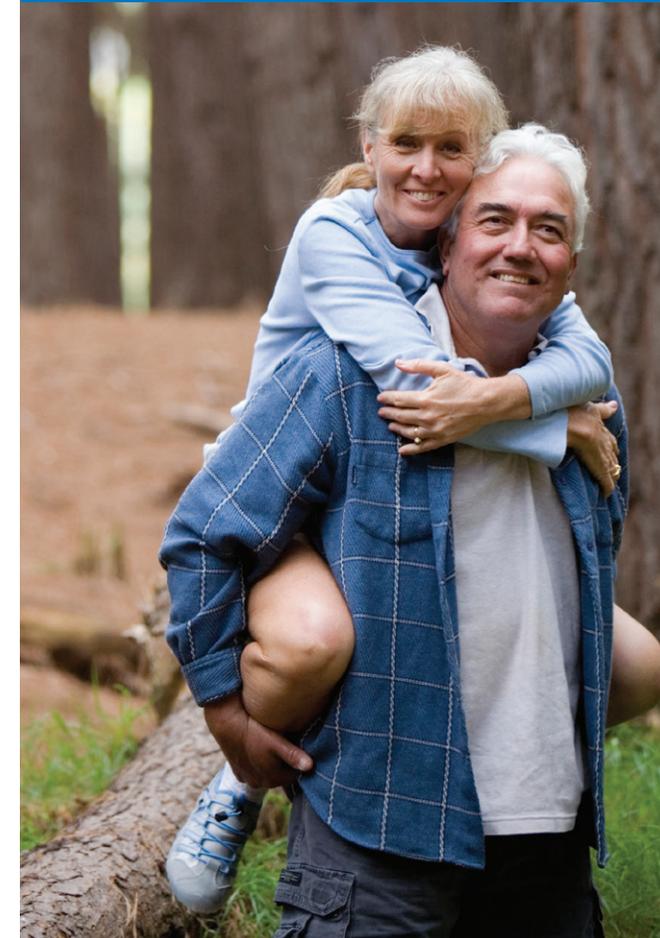
Alberta Health  
Services

Alberta Colorectal Cancer  
Screening Program



# COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

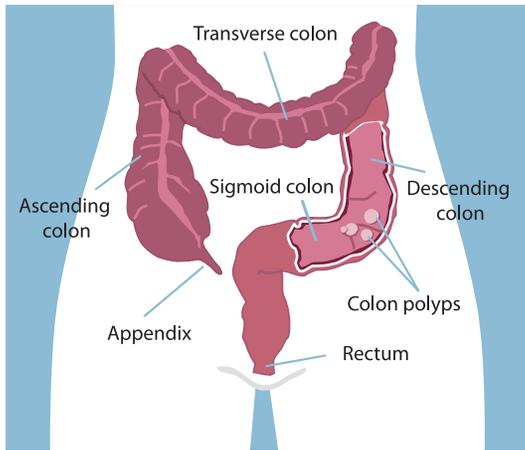
Common Questions



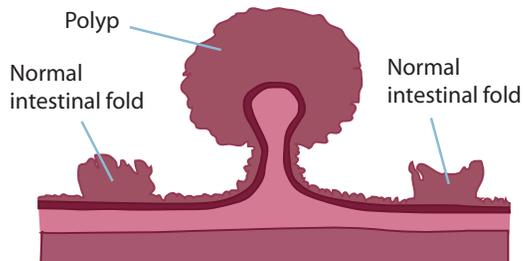
SCREENING  
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### What is colorectal cancer?

- Colorectal cancer is cancer that grows on the inner wall of the colon and rectum.
- The colon and rectum are also called the large bowel or large intestine, and are part of the digestive system.
- As cancers of the colon and rectum are similar, they are called colorectal cancer.



- Colorectal cancer can develop from polyps.
- Polyps are small growths that can grow on the inner wall of the colon and rectum.
- They can grow over a long time without any symptoms before becoming cancer.



### What causes colorectal cancer?

There is no single cause of colorectal cancer. Those at higher risk include people:

- with a family history of the disease
- who have polyps or have had colorectal cancer
- who have inflammatory bowel disease (for example: ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease)

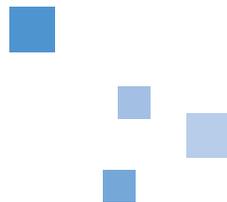
### What can I do to lower my risk?

There are lots of things you can do to lower your risk of colorectal cancer:

- Get screened regularly!
- Stay at a healthy body weight.
- Make regular exercise a part of your life.
- Drink less or stop drinking alcohol.
- Eat lots of vegetables and fruit.
- Eat more fibre (whole grains, beans, peas, bran) and less saturated fats (processed meat, high fat dairy products).
- Quit smoking or using snuff/chew.

### Why should I be screened?

About 1 in 13 men and 1 in 16 women in Alberta will develop colorectal cancer during their lifetime. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Alberta for men and women combined. Colorectal cancer can grow without showing any symptoms.



### Who should be screened?

All men and women 50 to 74 should be screened for colorectal cancer regularly. The risk increases with age. Most cases of colorectal cancer are in people 50 and over. Screening is the only way to find colorectal cancer early. When found early, 90% of cases can be prevented or treated successfully.

### How do I get screened?

Talk to your doctor or another healthcare provider about colorectal cancer screening. To find a doctor:

- Call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
- Visit [www.informalberta.ca](http://www.informalberta.ca)
- Visit [www.cpsa.ab.ca](http://www.cpsa.ab.ca)

### What is a FIT?

A FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) is a test you do at home:

- that is used to screen for colorectal cancer in people at average risk
- to find blood in the stool that you can't see

Talk to your healthcare provider about other available screening tests and which one may be right for you.

### How often should I do the FIT?

The FIT should be done every year.

