Primary Care Alberta

MONTH DD, YEAR

DEAR SAMPLE PATIENT:

Thank you for completing a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) - a screening test for colorectal cancer. FIT checks your stool (poop) for traces of blood that you can't see.

Your FIT result was abnormal.

An abnormal result means blood was found in your stool sample. While most people with an abnormal result do **not** have cancer, a follow-up test, called a colonoscopy, is recommended to find out why you have blood in your stool. If you've already discussed your abnormal FIT result with your healthcare provider, please disregard this letter.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy lets your doctor see the inside lining of the rectum and colon (bowel). This is done using a long, thin, flexible tube with a light and small video camera on the end. This test takes about 30 to 40 minutes. You can get medicine to make you comfortable during the colonoscopy.

What should I do next?

1. Book an appointment with your healthcare provider as soon as possible to discuss your abnormal result. Bring this FIT result letter with you to your appointment.
2. Talk with your healthcare provider about having a colonoscopy. You'll need to get a referral from your healthcare provider for a colonoscopy. To learn more about colonoscopy please see the back side of this letter and visit ahs.ca/colonoscopy.

What if I don't have a family doctor?

- Find a family doctor accepting new patients in your area and make an appointment. Visit albertafindadoctor.ca or call Health Link at 811.
- Make an appointment at a walk-in-clinic. Some communities have walk-in-clinics that don't require an appointment. These clinics are staffed by family doctors. To find a walk-in-clinic near you consult your Yellow Pages directory at yp.ca or call Health Link at 811.

If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program toll-free at 1-866-727-3926.

Sincerely,

Dr. Huiming Yang

Medical Director, Screening Programs

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Frequently Asked Questions

What causes an abnormal FIT result?

A FIT checks for hidden blood in the stool (poop), but it can't identify the cause. Blood in the stool can be there for many reasons and does not mean you have cancer or pre-cancerous polyps. It can also be there because of hemorrhoids or other conditions. When blood is found in your stool, it's important to find out what may have caused it. In most cases, a follow-up test, called a colonoscopy, is recommended. You'll need to get a referral from your healthcare provider for a colonoscopy. For information on scheduling or booking the appointment please speak to your healthcare provider.

What are the benefits of a follow-up colonoscopy?

Most colorectal cancers begin as growths called polyps on the inner wall of the colon or rectum. Not all polyps turn into cancer, but some types can with time. Having a follow-up colonoscopy can **prevent colorectal cancer** by helping your doctor find and remove polyps before they turn into cancer.

Looking at the numbers, if 100 people get a colonoscopy after an abnormal FIT, about 2 to 3 will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. When colorectal cancer is found early, **90% of cases** can be treated successfully. This is why a follow-up colonoscopy is so important.

Please note: If you have an abnormal FIT result do **not** repeat the FIT to see if you get a different result. Even if you get a normal result on a second test, a follow-up colonoscopy is still recommended to find the cause of the blood in your first stool sample.



Colonoscopy Video Series

Please watch the short videos in this series to learn more about what a colonoscopy is, what to expect and how to prepare. **To watch scan this QR code or visit myhealth.alberta.ca/colonoscopy**

Videos available in: عربي (Arabic), 简体中文 (Simplified Chinese), 繁體中文 (Traditional Chinese), دری (Dari), ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi), Af-Soomaali (Somali), Español (Spanish), ትግርኛ (Tigrinya)

About the Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program

The Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program is a province-wide, organized screening program designed to encourage eligible Albertans to get screened. The program aims to reduce the number of colorectal cancer-related deaths in the province. Visit screeningforlife.ca to learn more.

Your privacy is protected. To learn about our privacy policies and practices visit screeningforlife.ca/about-us-2

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