

# Colorectal Cancer Screening

Take steps to live cancer-free.

When detected early, colorectal cancer (cancer that begins in the colon or rectum) is highly treatable. Precancerous polyps—abnormal growths in the colon or rectum—can be removed before they turn into cancer. Mercy provides the expert care and screenings you need to stay ahead of colorectal cancer.

## Why Get Screened?

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in U.S. men and women. Symptoms often don't appear until the cancer is advanced, so getting screened is important.

Talk with your primary care doctor about when you should be screened. Screening is typically recommended for everyone 50 and older at normal risk for colorectal cancer. If you have a family history of the disease, you may need to be screened earlier and more often. You're at higher risk if:

- One of your parents, siblings or children had colorectal cancer.
- Two or more family members (parents, brothers, sisters or children) had it at any age.
- You inherit certain gene changes, including familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) and hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer (HNPCC). Most people who inherit these conditions will get colorectal cancer if they're not screened and treated.

## Screening Test Options

Ask your doctor which test is best for you. Most insurance companies are now required to cover colorectal screening tests, often with no out-of-pocket costs. Check with your health plan for details.

### Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

- Recommended **annually**
- Stool sample collected at home
- Detects blood in the colon
- 80% detection for colorectal cancer

### Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)

- Recommended **annually**
- Stool sample collected at home
- Detects blood in the colon
- Dietary restrictions may be required
- 20-50% detection for colorectal cancer

FIT and FOBT only detect colon blood. Positive findings require follow-up care and testing, since conditions other than polyps can cause bleeding.

### Colonoscopy

- Recommended **every 10 years**
- Considered the best option for detecting and removing polyps before they become cancer
- Detects and removes up to 90% of polyps or tumors; may not detect small or flat lesions less than 9mm
- Typically an outpatient procedure, although someone will need to drive you
- Requires bowel preparation

Take steps to prevent colorectal cancer or detect it as early as possible. Talk with your doctor about testing options and timing. Your doctor will provide at-home testing instructions or refer you to a gastroenterologist for procedures.



Your life is our life's work.