

Colon Cancer Screening

If you're 45, it's time.

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 (cancer that begins in the colon or rectum) 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 essential.

Talk with your primary care doctor about when you should be screened. Screening is typically recommended starting at age 45 if you're at normal risk for colon 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 before age 50.
- Two or more family members (parents, siblings or children) had it at any age.
- You've inherited certain gene changes that are associated with family cancer syndromes. Depending on the gene inherited, the lifetime risk for colon cancer is 40-80% if you're not screened and treated.
- Your racial or ethnic background puts you at risk. Black Americans have the second-highest colorectal cancer rates after Alaska Native people and are most likely to be diagnosed late.



Your life is our life's work.

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.

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
- Bowel preparation necessary

Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

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

Stool DNA Test (Cologuard)

- Recommended **every 3 years**
- Stool sample collected at home
- Detects blood and DNA changes in stool
- High detection rate of early-stage colon cancer

Hereditary Cancer Testing

- Hereditary cancer testing can benefit adults of all ages who have an immediate family history of cancer or an at-risk ethnicity. The test is completed with a simple saliva swab. Learn more at mercy.net/GeneTest.

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.