

# Colon cancer screening saves lives.

- Colon cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death.
- Early on, colon cancer has no symptoms, so you could have colon cancer and not know it. The only way to know for sure is to get screened.
- When colon cancer is caught early, it can be cured 90% of the time.



Massachusetts Department of Public Health

CA1377

**IF YOU'RE 50 OR OVER,  
TEST YOURSELF FOR  
COLON CANCER  
AT HOME**



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CURED 90% OF THE TIME.**

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## Why is it important to get screened for colon cancer?

Screening tests can help your doctor find and remove polyps before they turn into cancer. Polyps are growths that can turn into cancer if they are not removed. Screening can also help doctors find cancer early, when treatment works best.



## Who needs to be screened?

- Men and women who are 50 or older.
- If you have a personal or family history of polyps or colon cancer, you may need to start getting screened earlier.
- African Americans have a greater risk for colon cancer. If you're African American, it is especially important to be screened.

## A simple stool test can save your life.

A stool test—known as a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT)—is an easy, once-a-year screening test for colon cancer that you can do in the privacy of your own home. You can pick up the test kit from a doctor or medical provider.

### Do doctors recommend the stool test?

Doctors recommend this test for people who have an average risk of getting colon cancer. You should talk to your doctor about the best test for you.

### How does the test work?

The test kit may come with a stick, tube or brush that you use to collect a sample of your stool. Follow the instructions that come with the kit and return it to your doctor or a lab.



## What do stool tests look for?

Your doctor or lab will look for tiny amounts of blood in your stool, blood that you can't see with the naked eye. This hidden blood could be an early sign of colon cancer.

## What if my stool test finds blood?

If your doctor or lab finds blood in your stool sample, you will need a colonoscopy to see if there is cancer, a polyp, or other cause of bleeding. When colon cancer is found and treated early, it can be cured. When polyps are found and removed, colon cancer can be prevented.

**All insurance plans cover it.**

Talk to your doctor or medical provider to get a stool test kit.

[www.mass.gov/cancerscreenings](http://www.mass.gov/cancerscreenings)