Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives

Colorectal cancer is the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men and in women in the U.S. But it can be prevented. Screening helps find precancerous polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment is most effective.

If you're 50 or older—don't wait. Talk to your doctor and get screened.
When should I get screened for colorectal cancer?

Screening for colorectal cancer is recommended for men and women beginning at age 50. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that adults age 50 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer, and that adults age 76 to 85 ask their doctor if they should be screened.

What are the different screening tests for colorectal cancer?

Several screening tests can be used to find polyps or colorectal cancer. The benefits and risks of these screening methods vary. Discuss with your doctor which test is best for you. Examples of recommended screening tests are:

- Colonoscopy (every 10 years for people who do not have an increased risk of colorectal cancer)
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (every 5 years, or every 10 years with a Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) every year)
- Stool Tests, including:
  - Guaiac-based Fecal Occult Blood Test (gFOBT) (once a year)
  - Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) (once a year)
  - FIT-DNA Test (or Stool DNA test) (once every one to three years)

What questions should I ask my doctor?

- What colorectal cancer screening test(s) do you recommend for me?
- How do I prepare? Do I need to change my diet or my usual medication schedule?
- What happens during the test?
- Is there any risk involved?
- When and from whom will I get results?

If you’re having a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy you will want to know:

- Who will do the exam?
- Will I need someone with me?