

# Which Colon Cancer Screening Is Right for Me?

**Colonoscopy and stool-based tests are common ways to get screened for colon cancer (also known as colorectal cancer). The following questions and answers will help you compare both options to help you pick the best one for you. Ask your health care provider if you have additional questions.**



	<b>Colonoscopy</b>	<b>Stool-based test</b>
<b>Who performs the screening?</b>	A health care professional.	You.
<b>Where is the screening done?</b>	At a doctor's office or health care facility.	At home.
<b>Do I need to do any preparation before the screening?</b>	Yes. You will need to follow a liquid diet and take medicine to clean your colon the day before the colonoscopy. You will also need to make sure someone can take you home after.	There is usually no special preparation.
<b>Do I need to do anything during the screening?</b>	No. You will be given medicine to make you sleep (sedation) while the colonoscopy is done.	Yes. You will need to take a sample of your own stool (feces).
<b>Do I need to do anything after the screening?</b>	Yes. Someone will need to bring you home after. You will not be allowed to leave on your own.	Yes. You will need to either mail back the test or drop it off at your provider's office or a lab.
<b>How often do I need to get screened?</b>	If your result is normal, and you are not at increased risk for colon cancer, you should get your next colonoscopy in 10 years.	A stool-based test needs to be done every one to three years, depending on the type of test you do.

	Colonoscopy	Stool-based test
What is the screening checking for?	A colonoscopy looks directly inside your colon. A provider uses a special device to detect and remove polyps. A colonoscopy can also detect cancer before it begins to cause symptoms.	A stool-based test checks for blood in your stool. Some also check for specific signs of cancer.
<p>A <b>polyp</b> is a small bump or growth in your colon. Most polyps are not cancerous, but some can turn into cancer.</p>		
How well do these screenings work?	Colonoscopies are good at finding colon cancer and helping to prevent colon cancer by removing polyps.	Stool-based tests are good at finding colon cancer but not as good at finding polyps.
How long until I get my results?	You usually get initial results right after the colonoscopy. If you have any polyps, it will take a few days to get the final report.	You usually receive your results within a few days.
Is there a recovery period after the screening?	Yes. You may feel a bit tired and want to rest for a few hours after.	No.
Do I need to schedule a follow-up?	Usually not until your next colonoscopy is due. If any issues were found, your provider will discuss follow-up with you.	If the stool-based test is not normal, you will need a colonoscopy. Otherwise, you will just need to keep track of when your next screening is due.

**If you are interested in learning about other colon cancer screening options, ask your provider about the following:**

- Blood test
- CT colonography
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy

**Remember, the best screening is the one you will do.**