

What you need to know about preventing colon cancer



CancerCare Manitoba
ActionCancerManitoba

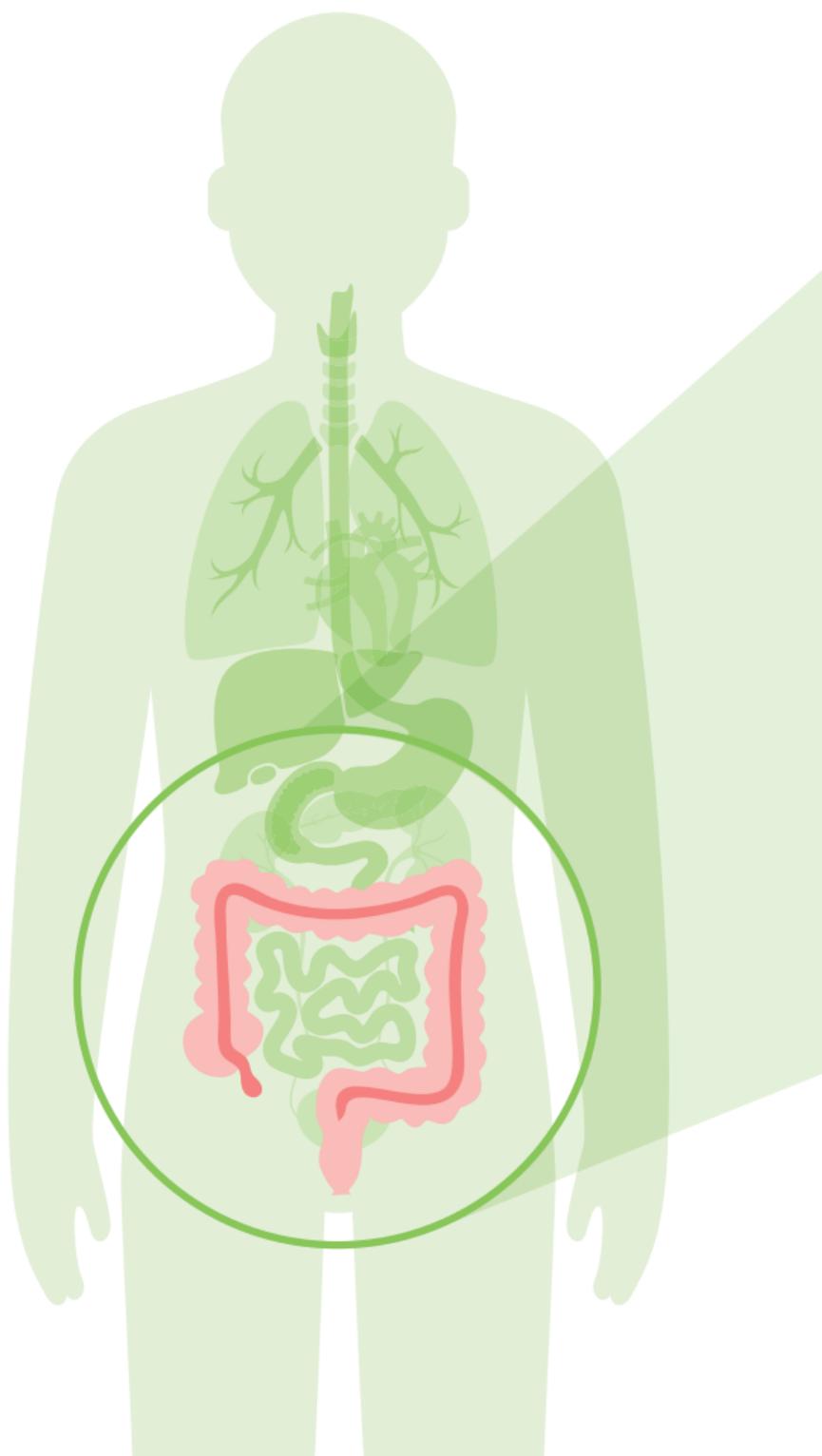
BreastCheck CervixCheck ColonCheck

What is the colon?

The colon is part of the body's digestive system. It moves waste from the small intestine to the rectum.

Together the colon and the rectum make up the large intestine (bowel).

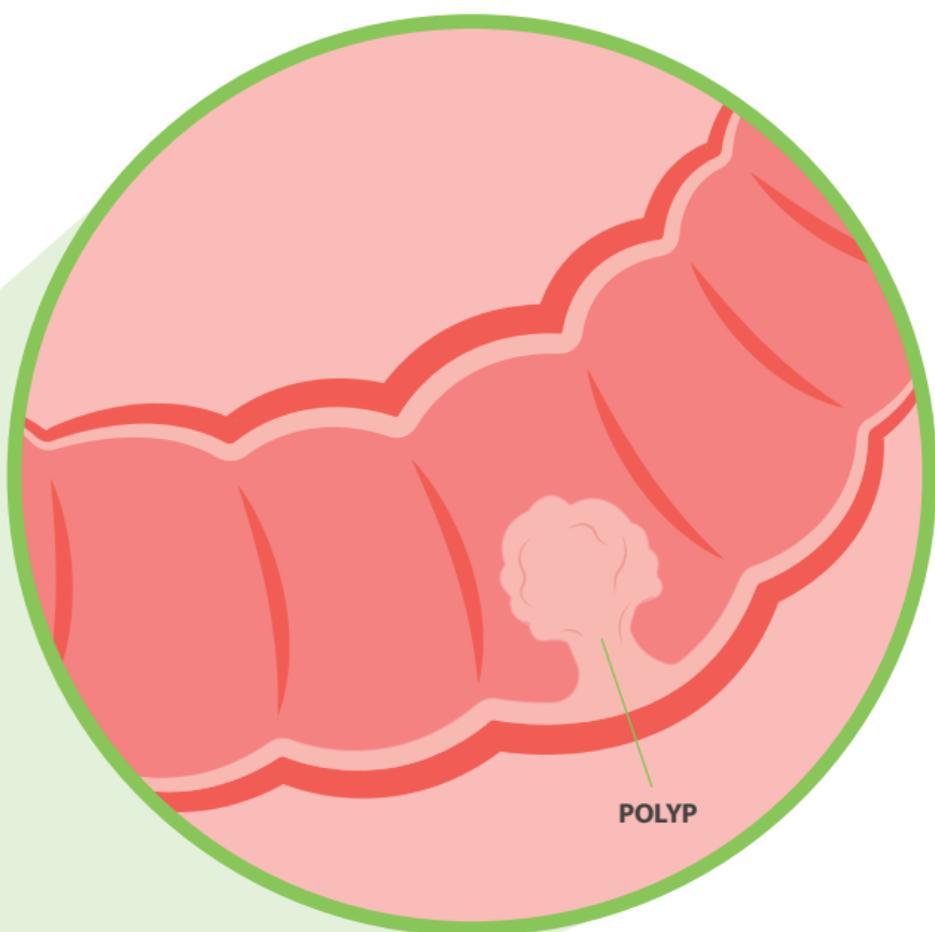
The small intestine absorbs most of the nutrients from what you eat and then passes on the leftover waste to the colon. The colon absorbs water from the waste. What is left is called stool (feces or poop). When you have a bowel movement, the stool leaves the rectum through the anus.



What is colon cancer?

Colon cancer, also known as colorectal or bowel cancer, starts from polyps (small growths) in the colon or rectum. You can have these polyps for many years and not have signs or symptoms.

Most polyps do not turn into cancer. However, some polyps can turn into cancer if they are not removed.



Am I at risk?

There are some factors that can increase your risk of colon cancer:

- ▶ **Age over 50:** Over 90% of colon cancer cases are in people over the age of 50.
- ▶ **Strong family history:** One or more first degree relatives (parent, brother, sister, child) who have been diagnosed with colon cancer.
- ▶ **Personal medical history:** A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) with associated colitis, colon cancer, familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or Lynch syndrome (HNPCC).
- ▶ **Lifestyle choices:** Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and eating red and processed meats.
- ▶ **Body weight:** Excess body fat and, in particular, belly fat.



What can I do to lower my risk?

1

LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

You can help lower your risk of colon cancer with the following healthy lifestyle behaviours:



Live smoke-free



Move more



Avoid alcohol



Eat healthy



Maintain a healthy weight

You can also help lower your risk of other cancers:



Get checked for breast and cervical cancer, if applicable



Be sun safe



Get vaccinated against HPV and Hepatitis B



Reduce exposure to radon

2

GET CHECKED FOR COLON CANCER

Why should I get checked?

Routine cancer screening and follow-up testing can prevent colon cancer by finding and removing polyps before they turn into cancer. It can also find cancer early when treatment may work better. Cancer screening looks for cancer in healthy people who do not have any signs and symptoms of the disease.

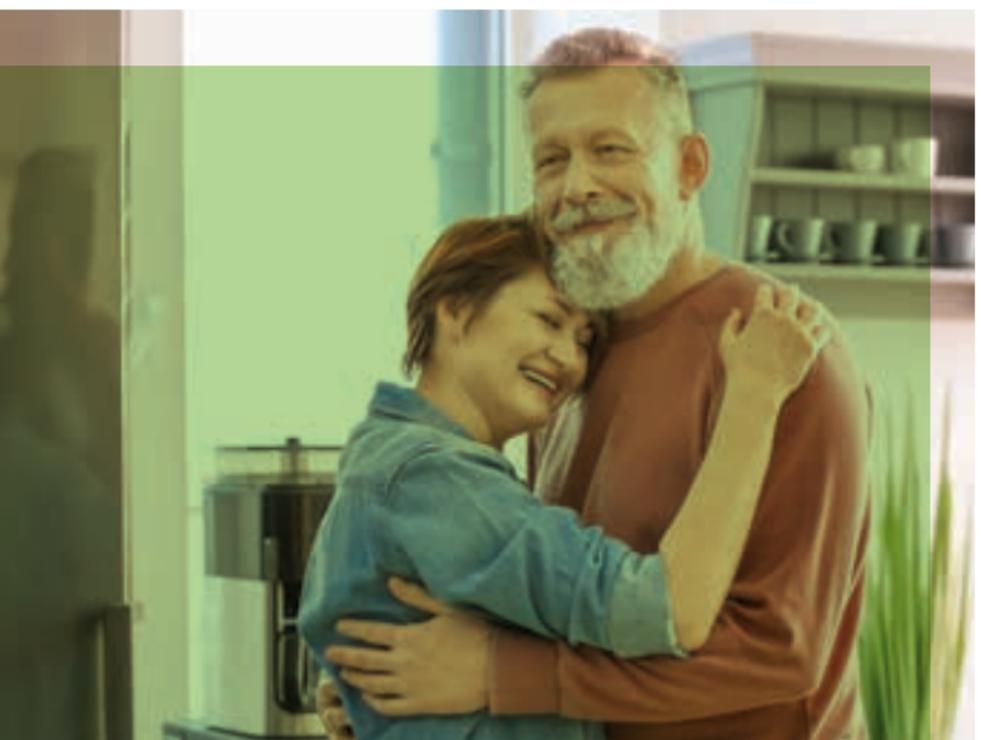
Most people age 50 to 74 should complete a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) every two years.

What is the FOBT?

The fecal occult blood test (FOBT) is a colon cancer screening test that you can do in your own bathroom. It is a simple test that looks for hidden blood in the stool (poop), which can be a sign of polyps or cancer.

People at average risk for colon cancer should do a FOBT every two years.

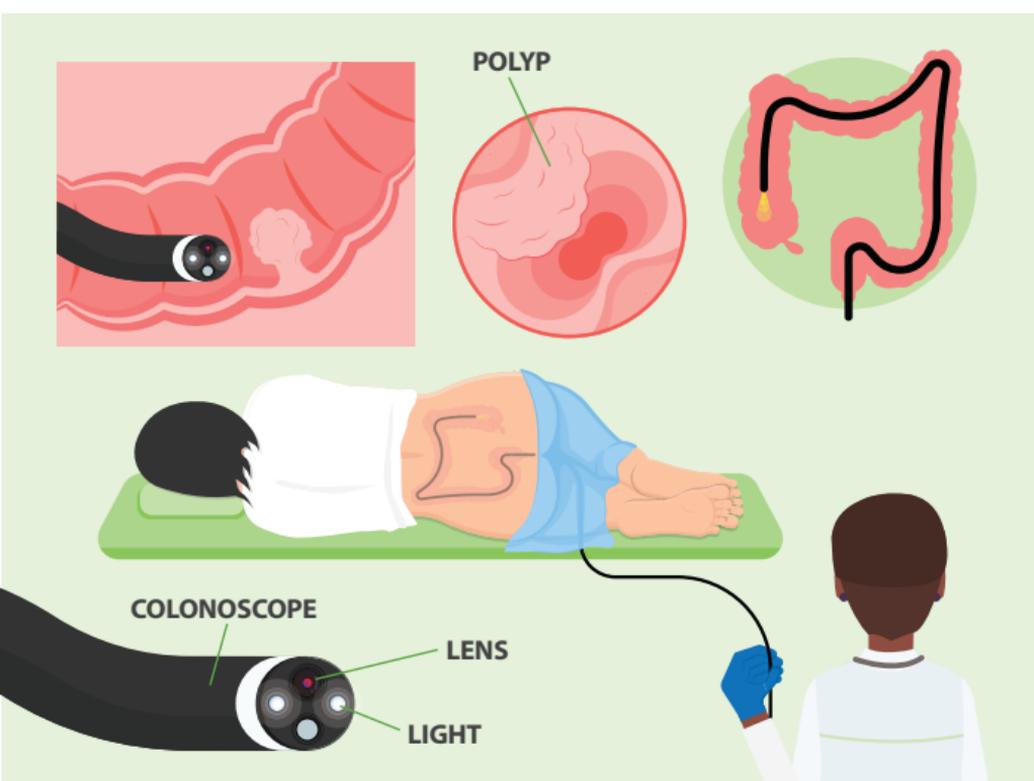
People age 50-74 with no first degree relatives with colon cancer and no personal medical history of IBD, FAP, and Lynch syndrome are at average risk for colon cancer.



What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure that allows the doctor to examine the inside of your colon and rectum. A long flexible tube with a small camera (colonoscope) is passed into your rectum and colon. On a video monitor, the doctor looks for any abnormal areas on the lining of the colon.

People who have a positive FOBT or people who are at increased risk of colon cancer should have a colonoscopy



People with significant family or personal history of colorectal disease may be at increased risk of colorectal cancer and should be screened with colonoscopy.

Talk to your healthcare provider for more information about the benefits and potential harms of colonoscopy.

What is ColonCheck?

ColonCheck is a screening program of CancerCare Manitoba. ColonCheck invites eligible people age 50-74 to be screened by mailing them a FOBT kit. ColonCheck refers people with abnormal screening test results to get the follow-up care they need.

Colon cancer can be prevented through
REGULAR SCREENING



Colon cancer is one of the most
**COMMONLY DIAGNOSED
CANCERS** in Manitoba



**MANITOBANS
OVER THE AGE
OF 50** are at a higher
risk of colon cancer



There are often
**NO EARLY WARNING
SYMPTOMS**
of colon cancer

9 OUT OF 10 TIMES
colon cancer can be
cured if caught early



Talk to your healthcare provider immediately if you have these signs and symptoms of colon cancer:

- ▶ blood in stool,
- ▶ abdominal discomfort that lasts more than a few weeks,
- ▶ change in bowel habits that lasts more than a few weeks,
- ▶ exhaustion or weight loss that you cannot explain.



What happens after I complete a FOBT?

Send your completed FOBT kit and Reply Form to the lab. Instructions are provided in the kit. ColonCheck will notify you of your result.

You can expect one of three test results with the FOBT kit:

FOBT RESULT	WHAT IT MEANS	COLONCHECK WILL
Normal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ No blood was found in your stool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Send you and your healthcare provider a letter with your result▶ Remind you to be screened again in two years if you are still eligible
Abnormal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Blood was found in your stool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Contact you by phone to discuss your result and referral for colonoscopy▶ Send you and your healthcare provider a letter with your result
Unsatisfactory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The lab was not able to provide a result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Send you another FOBT

THINGS TO CONSIDER



- ▶ Routine screening can find cancer early, but no screening test is perfect.
- ▶ An abnormal screening test result does not mean that cancer was found, it only means that blood was found.
- ▶ No screening test is perfect; it may say there is blood when there is no cancer which may result in unnecessary follow up. Or, it may miss blood which may result in a missed cancer diagnosis.
- ▶ All abnormal screening test results require follow-up to find where the blood is coming from. In most cases, a colonoscopy will be the recommended follow-up test.
- ▶ There are risks with colonoscopy. People may bleed or have a perforation (tear) in the colon that may require a hospital stay. In very rare cases, people have died.



How do I get checked?

Request your FOBT kit by:

- ▶ Filling out a form online at cancercare.mb.ca/screening,
- ▶ Calling ColonCheck at 1-855-95-CHECK (24325), or
- ▶ Talking to your healthcare provider.

Contact us to find out when you are due for screening.

Privacy & Personal Health Information

CancerCare Manitoba collects personal health information in order to administer the BreastCheck, ColonCheck, and CervixCheck cancer screening programs. Personal health information is provided to CancerCare Manitoba by Manitoba Health and Seniors Care (MHSC), by healthcare agencies, and by healthcare facilities, as authorized by clause 22(2)(g) of The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Personal health information may be used by CancerCare Manitoba to invite Manitobans to be screened for cancer, remind individuals and their primary care providers when individuals are due for screening or follow-up, advise people or their healthcare provider of test results, and conduct quality assurance and performance monitoring of the cancer screening programs. All personal health information is collected, used, disclosed and retained in a secure manner. If you have any questions regarding the collection, use, disclosure or storage of your personal health information by CancerCare Manitoba for the purposes of these programs, contact the CancerCare Manitoba Privacy Officer at CCMBPrivacyOffice@cancercare.mb.ca or the MHSC Legislative Unit at 204-788-6612.



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Interpreter services available.
Veuillez nous contacter pour obtenir ces renseignements en français.