

# Colorectal Cancer Tests

# Everything you need to know about Colorectal Cancer Testing

Today there are two common ways to test for colorectal cancer. Either one can help save your life!

**STOOL TESTS** detect cancer early by finding blood in your stool. There are two types of stool tests:

- FOBT (guaiac fecal occult blood test)
- FIT (fecal immunochemical test)

They are safe and easy to do in the privacy of your home, and are then sent to a lab for testing.

### Things to Consider:

- When testing yourself, you'll come in brief contact with a stool sample.
- May produce a positive result even if no cancer is present (false positives).
- If primary screening measure, test must be performed annually.
- After a positive test result, a colonoscopy is recommended.

**COLONOSCOPY** is a visual inspection of the colon done at a medical facility, usually with sedation or anesthesia. During a colonoscopy, any polyps observed may be cut out, which prevents cancer. Only needs to be done every 10 years.

### Things to Consider:

- The night before the test, you need to drink a strong laxative to clear out your colon.
- You may experience stomach pain, gas, or bloating.
- You will need to be driven home from the test.

**See inside and talk to your doctor to decide when and how you should get tested!**



Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

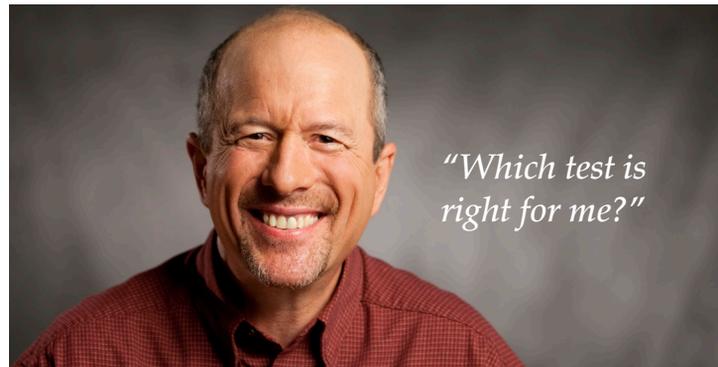
ScreenMaine.org is an initiative of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services.



*"Why get tested?"*



*"When should I get tested?"*



*"Which test is right for me?"*

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## Why get tested for colorectal cancer? **Because it could save your life.**

Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) is the second-leading cancer killer in the U.S. for both men and women. It can cause serious health problems even for survivors.

The good news is that colorectal cancer can be treated if detected early. It can also be prevented by early detection and removal of precancerous polyps. And today there are two common types of tests: Stool Tests and Colonoscopy (see reverse for details). Use the chart below to help you decide when and how you should get tested:

### When should I get tested for colorectal cancer?

### How should I get tested for colorectal cancer?

**People with no symptoms or family history should first get tested at age 50.**

Most people don't need to get tested after age 75.



**Ask your doctor which method is best for you: a Stool Test (FIT or FOBT) or a Colonoscopy.**

**If you have a family history of colon cancer or polyps OR you have suffered from inflammatory bowel disease: ask your doctor if it makes sense to get tested before age 50.**



**A colonoscopy is recommended. Check your insurance plan to determine if you can schedule a colonoscopy yourself, or need to consult your primary care provider first.**

**Remember: the best test is the one that gets done!**

*"These are my reasons to get screened!"*

