KNOW YOUR BODY

A Quick Guide to Colorectal Cancer

Office of Cancer Health Equity

Let us know how we can help you!

- Education Sessions
- Community Outreach
- Cancer navigation that is appropriate to both language and culture

Call 336-713-3665 or email CancerEquity@wakehealth.edu to learn more about the Office of Cancer Health Equity or to schedule an education session.

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What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colon, or colorectal cancer, is cancer that starts in the large intestine (colon) or the rectum (end of the colon). It is the second most leading cause of death from cancer. Colorectal cancer does not discriminate and occurs in both men and women.

**Symptoms**

Early colorectal cancer does not usually cause symptoms. However, symptoms can include:

- Abdominal pain
- Excessive gas
- Constipation
- Weight loss
- Change in bowel habits
- Change in the shape of stool
- Bloody stool
- Bleeding from the rectum

If symptoms last longer than two weeks, talk to a medical professional.

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**Screening**

Screening is especially important in detecting colorectal cancer because sometimes the disease progresses without symptoms or the symptoms are attributed to other causes.

- We recommend a colonoscopy at age 50, or age 45 for African Americans.
- People with a family history of colon cancer may need to start screening earlier.

Preparation the night before a colonoscopy can be unpleasant, but you’ll be asleep for the exam.

**Know Your Risk**

- Family History
- Being Overweight
- Food Choices
- Smoking
- History of Polyps

**Take Steps Towards Prevention**

- Talk to your family and know their story
- Eat healthy and exercise regularly
- Eat less red and processed meat
- Do not smoke
- Follow screening schedule; talk to your doctor

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**Testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)</td>
<td>EVERY YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fecal Immunotherapy Test (FIT)</td>
<td>EVERY YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT-DNA</td>
<td>EVERY 3 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Sigmoidoscopy</td>
<td>EVERY 5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Colonoscopy</td>
<td>EVERY 5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>EVERY 10 YEARS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOBT**: looks for blood in a small stool sample

**FIT**: uses chemicals to look for blood in a stool sample

**FIT-DNA**: detects altered DNA in the stool from a sample sent to a lab to be tested

**Flexible Sigmoidoscopy**: an exam that looks inside the rectum and lower colon

**Virtual Colonoscopy**: a procedure using X-rays to make a picture of your colon

**Colonoscopy**: an exam that looks inside the rectum and entire colon