

Screening for Colorectal Cancer Saves Lives!

Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths in Alberta.

Most cases of colorectal cancer are in people aged 50 and older with no family history. If you're **50 to 74 years old**, it's important to get screened regularly.

Here's why screening is so important:

- With regular screening you can find cancer early, when it's easier to treat. In fact, **90% of cases can be treated successfully** if found early.
- Colorectal cancer often starts as a polyp, a small growth in your colon or rectum. This polyp may be harmless, but over time it could develop into colorectal cancer.
- Screening can also find and remove pre-cancerous polyps and prevent colorectal cancer.

Remember

Colorectal cancer screening is for people who **don't have any symptoms**.

The colon and rectum are also called the large bowel and large intestine.

What is a FIT home stool test?

The Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) is an easy at-home colorectal cancer screening test. FIT **checks for blood in your stool** (poop) that you can't see. You should plan to do a FIT **every year starting at age 50**. Once you turn 75, the benefits of continuing to screen will depend on your personal health (how healthy you are overall). Talk to your doctor when you turn 75 to see if screening is still right for you.

Your doctor gave you a FIT kit. What happens now?

- 1 Collect a small sample of stool from one bowel movement. Easy to follow instructions come with the FIT kit.
- 2 Bring the finished test and your lab requisition to the lab within 7 days of collecting your sample.

Your doctor will get your results in the next few weeks.

What happens if the FIT result is abnormal?

An abnormal FIT result means blood was found in your stool sample. Although blood in the stool can be from cancer or polyps, it can also be there for other reasons such as hemorrhoids or another condition. If your FIT result is abnormal a colonoscopy may be needed to find the cause.

Are there risks with doing a FIT?

FIT does run the risk of missing blood in the stool, because a polyp or cancer may not bleed at the time you take the test. This is why **screening with FIT every year** gives you the best chance of finding colorectal cancer early when treatment can work better. Tell your doctor if you've symptoms like rectal bleeding, abdominal (belly) pain or a change in your stool pattern, as other testing may be needed.

To learn more about the Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program visit **screeningforlife.ca** or **call us** toll-free at **1-866-727-3926**.