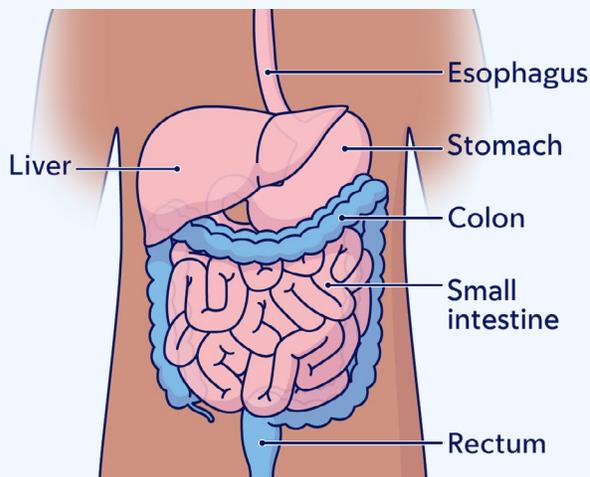


Your Quick Guide to Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer screening can help you be healthy! Screening tests help find early signs of cancer, before you have symptoms.

Colorectal cancer starts when abnormal (not normal) cells grow. These cells can form a mass called a tumor. Colorectal cancers are found in your colon and rectum.

Colorectal cancer can be treated and cured if it's found early. Screening can save your life.



MSK's screening guidelines for colorectal cancer

Our approach to screening saves the most lives.

MSK recommends that people at average risk for colorectal cancer start getting screened at age 45. The type of screening you have, and how often you go, are based on your own risk factors.

You're at average risk if you're 45 or older and:

- You do not have any symptoms.
- You do not have a family history of colorectal cancer.
- You never had polyps in your colon or rectum.
- You never had inflammatory bowel disease, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's colitis.

What are the screening tests for colorectal cancer?

There are many screening tests for colorectal cancer. The 2 most common are:

- a colonoscopy (kow-luh-naa-skah-pee)
- a fecal immunochemical test (FIT)

MSK recommends getting a colonoscopy. It can both find and prevent cancer. This procedure lets your doctor find and remove any polyps from the lining of your colon or rectum. Polyps can become cancer.

A FIT checks for blood in your stool, a possible sign of cancer. A FIT is easy to do at home. You mail back your FIT for testing. But stool tests can't find or remove polyps. Depending on the stool test result, your healthcare provider may recommend a colonoscopy.



What are the risks for colorectal cancer that I can't control?

Some risk factors never change, such as your age, family history, and your genes. Talk with your healthcare provider about screening for colon cancer if you have any of these risk factors:

- You had precancer polyps on a screening test.
- You have inflammatory bowel disease, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.
- You have a close blood family member who had colorectal cancer before they were age 50.
- You have a hereditary (it runs in your family) condition, such as Lynch syndrome or familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP).

Your race can also play a role in your risk for getting colorectal cancer. For example, in the United States, colorectal cancers affect the Black community at a higher rate than any other race.

How can I lower my risk of colorectal cancer?

A risk factor is anything that raises your chance of getting a disease, such as cancer. There are some risk factors you can control with healthy habits. Knowing your risk for colorectal cancer can help you talk with your care team about your lifestyle.

MSK recommends these healthy habits, which may lower your risk of colon cancer:



Eat more fruits, vegetables, beans, and legumes.



Exercise regularly. MSK-led studies show exercising for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week can lower your cancer risk.



Maintain a healthy weight for your body.



Do not smoke or vape (use e-cigarettes).



Do not drink alcohol regularly.

Actions you can take when you're ready



Learn your risk for colorectal cancer.



Stay healthy and keep healthy habits.



Talk with your healthcare provider about any changes in your body.



Get screened for colorectal cancer based on your risk.

Connect with us.

The MSK Direct team is available to help you and your family make smart decisions about the best cancer care options. Call the dedicated MSK Direct phone number **646-449-1515** or learn more at msk.org/mskdirectforyou.