

Stool Based Screening Tests

Colon cancer is the 2nd leading cancer killer among men and women in the United States, but it does not have to be. Colon cancer is up to 90% curable when found and treated early. All men and women ages 50-75 should be screened for colon cancer.

There are several screening tests for colon cancer. One option is the stool based test. With the stool based test, there is:

- No liquid to drink or pills to take
- No time off work
- No travel – it is done in the privacy of your home

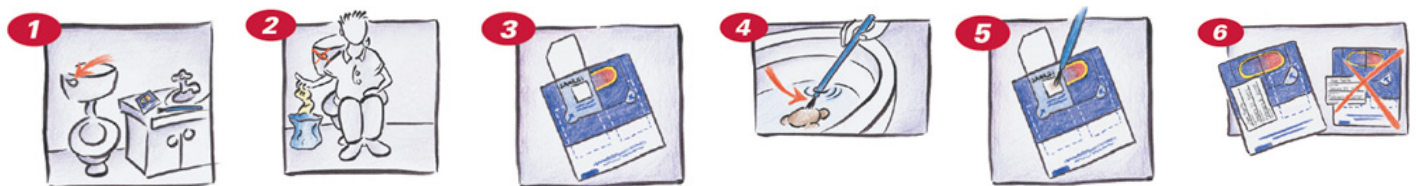
What are stool based screening tests?

There are two types of stool based screening tests that check for hidden (occult) blood in your stool. They are called FOBT (sensitive fecal occult blood test or sensitive guaiac test) and FIT (fecal immunochemical test). With FIT and sensitive FOBT tests, no diet or medication schedule changes are needed. If blood is found in your stool through this test, further testing is required. If no blood is found, you repeat the test after one year.

These tests can find cancer early, when treatment works best. Early colon cancer often has no symptoms; this means someone could have polyps (abnormal growths in your colon that can turn into cancer) or cancer and not know it.

How do I use the take-home test?

You do the test at home using a test kit that you get at your doctor's office. At home, you use a collection tool to get a small amount of stool after you go to the bathroom. You then follow directions in the kit to return the test by mail to your doctor or a lab. The test is clean, simple, and can be done in less than five minutes.



What is the cost?

These tests are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and many insurance plans. If you are uninsured, stool based screening tests may be available to you at little or no cost.

What should I do now?

Talk to your doctor about getting checked for colon cancer and whether FOBT or FIT is right for you. If you do not have a doctor, call to your local health department.

For more information, visit www.coloncancerpreventionproject.org or call (800) 841-6399.