

Questions?

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ColonCheckmb.ca

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Pour recevoir cette brochure en français veuillez nous contacter.

Go to ColonCheckmb.ca to tell us what you think about this pamphlet.

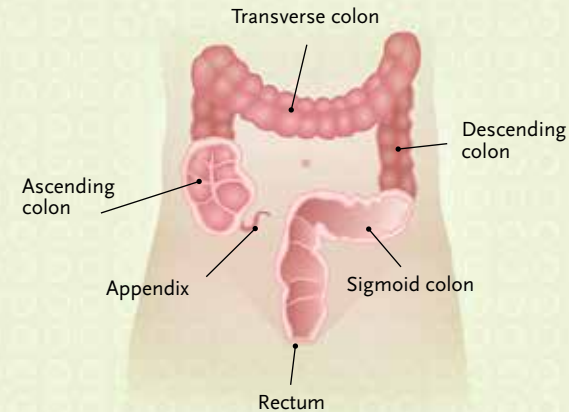
COVER PHOTO: Dr. and Mrs. Fayez Salem of Winnipeg, Manitoba. They take the time to get screened for colon cancer and encourage other Manitobans to do the same.



Colon Cancer Screening

What do I need to know about colon cancer?

Cancer in the colon and rectum is often called colorectal cancer. In this brochure we use the term colon cancer to mean either colon or rectal cancers.



Colon Cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Manitoba. In a year, over 900 men and women will be diagnosed with colon cancer. Over 300 people will die from it.

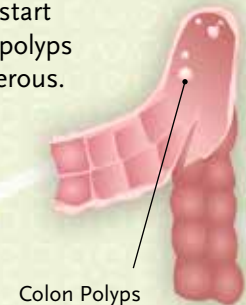
The time to check is before symptoms start. You can feel well and not even know that you have polyps or colon cancer.

When colon cancer is found in the earliest stage, there is over a 90% chance of survival.

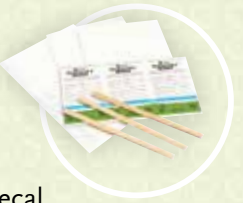
How do most colon cancers start?

Most colon cancers start as polyps. But most polyps do not become cancerous.

Polyps are non-cancerous growths that can bleed into the colon or rectum.



What is the home screening test?



It is a test that looks for hidden blood in the stool (poop). It is also called a Fecal Occult Blood Test or FOBT. It is a simple test that you do in your own bathroom.

You place samples of your stool on a test card and send it to the lab where it is checked for hidden blood.

Blood may be a sign of polyps or colon cancer.

Should I do this test?

It is recommended that most people ages 50 to 74 do a home screening test every 2 years.

Some people might be at increased risk and need:

- colon cancer screening before age 50 or
- a different test called a colonoscopy.

Speak with your health care provider about screening if this applies to you.

Do **not** do this test if you have:

- ✓ Rectal bleeding or any sign of blood after bowel movements.
- ✓ Unexplained weight loss, tiredness, exhaustion, abdominal pain or cramping.
- ✓ Persistent change in bowel habits such as:
 - diarrhea or constipation for more than a few weeks.
 - stools that are consistently more narrow than usual.
 - the feeling that you are not completely emptying your bowel.

These may be symptoms of colon cancer.

If you have any of these symptoms, see your doctor or nurse immediately as you may need other tests.

What are the benefits of the home screening test?

Completing this test and any follow-up test may find either polyps or colon cancer in its early stages, when treatment is most effective.

The home screening test has been shown to save lives from colon cancer.

What are the risks of the home screening test?

The home screening test alone has little risk of harm.

An abnormal result leads to tests such as colonoscopy that have more risk.

The home screening test is not perfect as it may:

- say there is blood when there really is none and may result in unnecessary further testing.
- miss blood in a sample and possibly miss a diagnosis of polyps or cancer.

Some polyps and colon cancers do not bleed. So the home screening test will not detect all polyps or cancer.

What if I have done a test like this before?

You do not need to do the test now if you have done a home screening test in the past 2 years. Call us to let us know, and we will not send you a test.

What if I have had a colonoscopy?

You do not need to do the test now if you have had a colonoscopy in the past 5 years. Call us to let us know, and we will not send you a test.

What if I have family members who had colon cancer?

You may be at higher risk of developing colon cancer if you have either of the following:

- 2 close family members (mother or father, sister or brother, son or daughter) with colon cancer or polyps.
- 1 close family member diagnosed with colon cancer or polyps before age 60.

You can still do the home screening test but we recommend that you see your doctor or nurse to discuss colonoscopy.

What if no one in my family has had colon cancer?

Screening is still important. About 80% of people who get colon cancer have no family history of the disease.

What if I have had colon cancer, polyps or an inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis?

Do not do this test. You may need to have a colonoscopy instead of the home screening test. If you have any of these conditions and have questions about if you need a colonoscopy, see your doctor or nurse.

What happens after the test?

After you do the test, please return it by following the instructions sent with the test. The lab will analyze the test. We will send you and your doctor or nurse a letter with your result.

What does a normal result mean?

A normal result means that no blood was found in your stool. We recommend that you repeat the home screening test in 2 years. We will send you a test when you are eligible to be screened again. If you notice any of the previously listed symptoms, see your doctor or nurse immediately.

What does an abnormal result mean?

An abnormal result means that there was blood found in your stool. There are many reasons for this result. This does not necessarily mean that you have cancer. More testing will need to be done to see where the blood is coming from. It could be coming from a polyp or cancer. If certain polyps are not removed, they could turn into colon cancer.

About 3% of people who do the home screening test will have an abnormal result. They will be contacted to arrange follow-up testing. Usually a colonoscopy is recommended.

Of these people who have a colonoscopy:

- about 10% will have colon cancer.
- about 30% will have a polyp and may require follow up.

What is a colonoscopy?

During a colonoscopy, a long flexible lighted tube (scope) is inserted into your rectum.

A doctor looks at pictures of the lining of the colon and can remove polyps using tiny tools passed through the scope.

For most people, having a colonoscopy is a safe and straightforward procedure. Rarely, some people may have bleeding or other complications such as a perforation (tear) in the colon that may require a hospital stay.

How did you get my name?

Manitoba Health gives us the names and addresses of people ages 50 to 74.

We are also told who has had a colonoscopy in the last 5 years or a home screening test in the last 2 years. We need this information to know who should receive a test.

What do you do with my information?

We follow the Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). This means that:

- we keep the information from the response form and the test results (for the home screening test and any follow up tests).
- all program staff agree to protect your confidentiality.
- the doctor or nurse that you have identified on the response form will receive your results. He or she may ask us for more information on your follow-up tests

If you have questions call ColonCheck at 1-866-744-8961 or the CancerCare Manitoba privacy office at 204-788-2266.

Can I take my name off your mailing list?

Yes, call us at 204-788-8635 or toll-free at 1-866-744-8961 if you do not wish to be contacted in the future. If you change your mind, you can call us to join the program again.

