

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Sometimes it is called *colon cancer*, for short. As the drawing shows, the colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus. Sometimes abnormal growths, called *polyps*, form in the colon or rectum. Over time, some polyps may turn into cancer.

Symptoms

Colorectal polyps and colorectal cancer don't always cause symptoms, especially at first. Someone could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it. That is why getting screened regularly for colorectal cancer is so important.

If you have symptoms, they may include:

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement).
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away.
- Losing weight and you don't know why.

Colorectal Cancer Screening Tests

- **Stool Tests** - uses the chemical guaiac to detect blood in the stool. It is done once a year.
- **FIT DNA Test** - combines the FIT with a test that detects altered DNA in the stool.
- **Flexible Sigmoidoscopy** - The doctor checks for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and lower third of the colon.
- **Colonoscopy** - to check for polyps or cancer inside the rectum and the entire colon. During the test, the doctor can find and remove most polyps and some cancers.
- **CT Colonography** - uses X-rays and computers to produce images of the entire colon.

