

COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING GET FIT TESTED!



PATIENT EDUCATION FACT SHEET

Colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. But it doesn't need to be! Screening can detect this cancer early, when it is more easily treated and can often be cured.

What is FIT Testing?

The fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is a colorectal cancer screening test that you can complete in the privacy and convenience of your own home. Since most colon cancer bleeds, FIT works by detecting small amounts of blood in the stool. FIT is typically recommended once a year.

For this test, you receive a test kit from your VA provider. The kit has everything you need to complete the screening process, including a brush or stick to sample a small amount of stool from the toilet. Once you've got that sample, you can mail the kit back to VA or bring it to the lab.

About one third of adults

50-75 in the United States, the age where the diagnosis of colon cancer happens most often, **have never been screened.**



SHOULDER to SHOULDER
Every Step of the Way

Should I Be Screened for Colorectal Cancer?

Screening is recommended for average-risk Veterans aged 45 to 75 years. Some Veterans are at higher-than-average risk and may be recommended to have screening earlier than age 45. Talk to your provider if you have a family history of colon or rectal cancer or if you have any concerning symptoms, such as passing blood from your rectum.

The decision to be screened after age 75 should be made on an individual basis. If you are older than 75, talk to your provider about if it makes sense for you to be screened.

What are My Risks as a Veteran for Colorectal Cancer?

Your risk of getting colorectal cancer increases as you get older. To help prevent colorectal cancer, be sure to:

- ✓ Reduce sedentary time
- ✓ Lower your alcohol intake
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Choose healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, and foods that are higher in fiber like whole grains, and lower in animal fats, limit or avoid processed meats.
- ✓ Get screened routinely, beginning at age 45.

So get FIT! Be sure YOU are up to date on your screening for colorectal cancer.

For more information on cancer prevention, visit cancer.va.gov.
To find a VA provider near you, use this QR Code:

