

Colorectal Cancer Screening

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UVA Cancer Center
An NCI-Designated Cancer Center

Screening at UVA Cancer Center

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the United States. Encouraging patients to receive routine screening is important because early detection of polyps, which are easily removed, can lower a patient's risk of cancer.

At UVA Cancer Center, our multidisciplinary team of physicians specializing in colon cancer screening and treatment includes gastroenterologists, surgeons and medical/radiation oncologists. We provide individualized, comprehensive care for each patient. Whether your patient needs colorectal cancer screening or has advanced colon cancer, UVA has the experience and expertise to provide the best care possible.

UVA Cancer Center is the only cancer center in Virginia nationally ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* for 2016-2017. We also received the highest possible performance rating for all nine common conditions and procedures reviewed, including colon cancer surgery. UVA is one of only 69 National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers in the United States.

UVA Cancer Center offers the full spectrum of tests available for colorectal cancer screening. To provide the best possible protection against colorectal cancer, we follow guidelines by the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG).

The ACG distinguishes between colorectal cancer **prevention** and **detection** tests, recommending prevention tests as the best way to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.

Prevention Tests

Colonoscopy: The Preferred Colorectal Cancer Prevention Test

The ACG considers colonoscopy the gold standard for preventing colorectal cancer. In addition to detecting polyps, it can prevent colon cancer by removing precancerous polyps.

For normal-risk individuals, the American College of Gastroenterology recommends colonoscopy every 10 years beginning at age 50 (age 45 for African-Americans).

Detection Tests

The ACG recognizes that colonoscopy may not always be possible. UVA Cancer Center also offers the following tests.

Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT): The Preferred Colorectal Cancer Detection Test

The ACG recommends annual fecal immunochemical testing as the preferred colorectal cancer detection test. FIT is a relatively new test that detects hidden blood in the stool. If results are positive, a colonoscopy is recommended.

CT Colonography

CT colonography (CTC) is an X-ray designed to look for colon polyps and cancers. CTC every five years is an alternative to colonoscopy for patients who decline colonoscopy. If polyps are detected, a regular colonoscopy is required to remove these precancerous growths.



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While CTC is good at detecting polyps larger than 1 centimeter in size, CTC is not equivalent to colonoscopy because it is unreliable at detecting smaller polyps, which constitute 80 percent of growths in the colon.

Alternative Tests

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every five to 10 years
- Hemocult® SENZA® annually
- Cologuard® fecal DNA testing every three years

The benefits and risks of these screening methods vary. We recommend that physicians determine which screening test is best for individual patients, and that patients check with their insurance providers to find out which tests are covered by their insurance plan. Medicare helps to pay for colorectal cancer screening.