



**IF YOU WERE  
SEE-THROUGH, IT  
WOULD BE  
EASIER TO SPOT  
COLON CANCER.**

Unfortunately you're not.  
So talk to your health care  
provider about screening today.

**Fact is, Ontario has one of the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the world and thousands die from it each year. When caught early through regular screening, there is a 90 per cent chance colorectal cancer can be cured. That's why screening and early detection is so important to your health. If you're over 50 years old or have a family history of the disease, talk to your health care provider about colorectal cancer screening.**

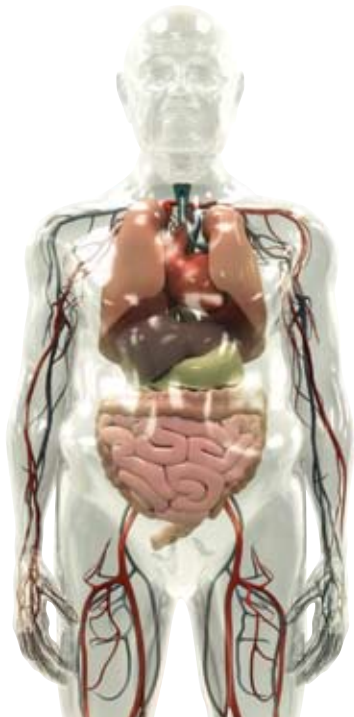
## **What is ColonCancerCheck?**

Colorectal cancer is serious business. It's the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in Ontario for both men and women, but it is highly curable when caught early. That's why the Government of Ontario, in collaboration with Cancer Care Ontario, created ColonCancerCheck – a province-wide colorectal cancer screening program that encourages all adults aged 50 and older to get screened for colorectal cancer.

### **THE FACTS**

You can't afford to ignore colorectal cancer and here's why:

- When detected early through regular screening, there's a 90 per cent chance of curing colorectal cancer
- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Ontario
- It is estimated that 7,800 Ontarians are diagnosed with colorectal cancer and 3,250 die from the disease each year
- In 2007, less than one quarter of Ontarians aged 50-74 had done a Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) in the previous two years. An FOBT is an easy-to-use take-home test that screens for colorectal cancer



## COMMON SYMPTOMS

**There are no physical signs or symptoms during the early stages of the disease.** As colorectal cancer progresses the following late stage symptoms may occur:

- A change in your bowel movements
- Blood (either bright red or very dark) in your stool (feces)
- Diarrhea, constipation or feeling that your bowel does not empty completely
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- Stomach discomfort
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue

If you have any of these symptoms, it is important to talk to your health care provider about appropriate treatment.

## Types of Screening

There are different ways to screen for colorectal cancer. The common screening methods that are part of the ColonCancerCheck program are:

### 1) Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)

The FOBT is a simple test that can be done in the privacy of your own home. It tests for blood in your stool, which may be a sign of colorectal cancer. The test involves you collecting two small samples of your stool on three different days. Once completed, you can mail the kit in a postage-paid addressed envelope for laboratory analysis. The FOBT kit includes a detailed instruction sheet so you'll know exactly what to do.

Health care providers recommend that people aged 50 and over who do not have a family history of colorectal cancer do an FOBT every two years. Through the ColonCancerCheck program, FOBT kits are widely available at health care provider offices across the province. Ask your health care provider about getting yours.

### 2) Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy involves inserting a long flexible tube through the rectum and extending it along the length of the colon. At the end of the tube is a small camera to help the specialist examine your colon and rectum, and remove polyps. A colonoscopy is recommended for individuals at increased risk and for those who have a positive FOBT result.

## What is Colon Cancer?

It is cancer of the colon or rectum and clinically referred to as colorectal cancer. It generally develops from tiny growths inside the colon or rectum called polyps which can bleed into the colon or rectum. Polyps are not cancerous at the outset, but some polyps do turn into cancer. If cancerous polyps are treated early, there is a 90 per cent chance colorectal cancer can be cured. That's why regular screening is so important.

## Are You At Risk?

Age and family history are two common risk factors for colorectal cancer. If you have a family member (parent, child, sibling) who has had colorectal cancer, you are at greater risk and should have a colonoscopy.

If you are over 50 and do not have a family history of the disease, you should speak to your health care provider about screening for colorectal cancer using a simple take-home Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT).

Speak to your health care provider about determining your risk for colorectal cancer and the appropriate screening method for you.

If you do not have a health care provider visit [ColonCancerCheck.ca](http://ColonCancerCheck.ca), or call INFOline at 1-866-410-5853 for information on how you can be screened for colorectal cancer.

## REDUCING THE RISK

You can reduce your risk of colorectal cancer, as well as many other diseases by:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Leading an active lifestyle
- Not smoking
- Drinking alcoholic beverages in moderation

## Take Action

Get informed about this important health initiative.  
Make it part of a regular cancer screening routine.  
Talk to your health care provider about the  
right screening method for you.

**For more information go to [ColonCancerCheck.ca](http://ColonCancerCheck.ca)  
or call INFOline at 1-866-410-5853, (TTY 1-800-387-5559).**