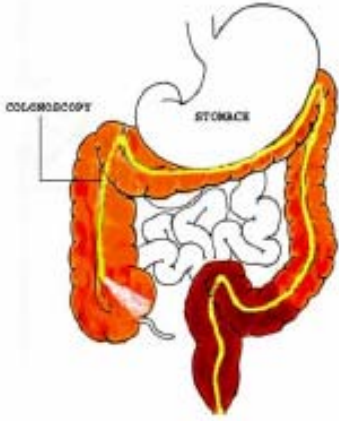


5 Tests to Find Polyps and Colorectal Cancer:

These tests are used as “screening tests”. Screening tests are procedures that look for a disease early, before there are any noticeable symptoms. Screening tests can find a disease when it is easier to treat. Screening tests can also find that there is no disease at all.

1. Colonoscopy looks directly inside your large intestine, examining your entire colon. A thin, flexible tube is inserted into your colon. A tiny camera on the end of the tube lets your doctor see inside. If you have a polyp, it will probably be removed during colonoscopy. If it looks like cancer a sample piece (called a “biopsy”) of it may be taken out and examined.



Before the Colonoscopy, you will receive medication to help you relax. You'll need someone to take you home after the test. There is a small chance (1 person in

1,000) of having a serious complication from the Colonoscopy procedure. Colonoscopy is usually recommended every 10 years after you reach 50 years old, but this may depend on your own situation and doctor's recommendation. When you have a Colonoscopy you don't need any other tests to find polyps or colorectal cancer.



2. Sigmoidoscopy is similar to Colonoscopy except that it only looks inside the lower end of the colon, the sigmoid. If you have a polyp that looks like cancer, a sample piece (biopsy) may be taken out for further examination. You may need a Colonoscopy after a Sigmoidoscopy so that your entire colon can be checked. You may feel mild cramping during the test, and there is a very small chance

(1 person in 10,000) of having a serious complication from the Sigmoidoscopy procedure. Sigmoidoscopy is often recommended every 5 years when you are 50 years or older, unless you have a Colonoscopy first. This may depend on your own situation and doctor's recommendation.

3. Barium Enema uses x-rays to find polyps or cancers in your colon. A small tube is inserted in your rectum and fluid called barium is passed into your colon. The barium highlights polyps on the x-rays. If a polyp is found with a Barium Enema Test, you will need a Colonoscopy test and a biopsy. You may feel mild cramping during the Barium Enema Test. There is a very small chance (not

even 1 person in 10,000) of having a serious complication from the procedure. The Barium Enema Test is often recommended every 10 years when you are 50 years or older, unless you have a Colonoscopy first. This may depend on your own situation and doctor's recommendation.

Before you have a Barium Enema Test, Sigmoidoscopy Test, or Colonoscopy test, you must clear out your colon. This may involve drinking only clear liquids, avoiding certain foods for a few days, and using a laxative or enema.



4. Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) or Hemoccult Test is recommended at age 50 and every year after. This test looks for hidden blood in your stool. Some polyps and cancers bleed in such small amounts that you can't see it using only your eyes. Two days before this test avoid eating foods like red meat, turnips, broccoli, artichokes, cauliflower, cucumbers, bok choy, or Chinese cabbage and vitamin and mineral supplements. Instead you should eat bran cereals, rice, and other foods with lot of fiber.

You can do the Fecal Occult Blood Test at home using a kit from your doctor. Be sure to go over the instructions with your doctor. The Fecal Occult Blood Test finds hidden blood but it can't tell what caused it. Most patients with hidden blood in the stool don't have cancer. If the FOBT shows that you have hidden blood in your stool, another test is needed to find out if you have polyps or colorectal cancer.



5. Digital Rectal Exam is a test that allows your doctor to feel inside the rectum for abnormal areas. This can be done at your regular doctor visit and requires no special preparation. It takes just a few moments for this exam to be done. Insurance or Medicare may or may not pay for a test. Ask your health insurance company. If you don't have health insurance, ask your doctor about special discounts or free tests.

The tests for finding colorectal cancer may be a little uncomfortable, but the benefits can save your life!

Text (Ethnomed - <http://ethnomed.org>) and software (Healthway Software – www.healthwaysoftware.com) licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>); Funded by a grant from the National Cancer Institute through the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness Research and Training (AANCART); Special thanks to Dr. Robert Fusco and <http://qihealth.com> for contributing photo images taken during colonoscopy.