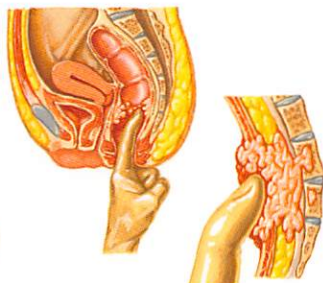


Colonoscopy is used to detect cancer as well as precancerous polyps.



Tumors near the rectum can be found with a rectal exam.



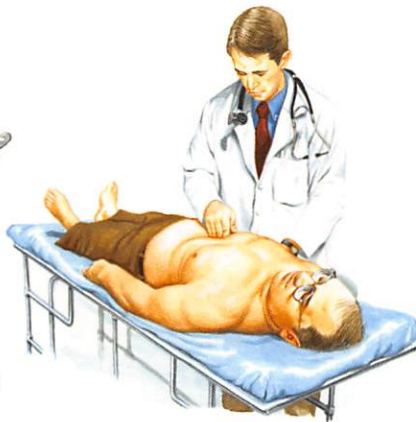
CT imaging can sometimes reveal polyps. CT is also used to see if cancer has spread beyond the colon.



To reduce the risk of developing colon cancer, eat a high-fiber diet and exercise.



Get an annual physical including a rectal exam if you are over 50 or in a higher risk group. Discuss screening colonoscopy with your doctor.



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NOTES

How Is Colon Cancer Diagnosed?

The doctor will do a complete physical examination, including a digital rectal examination (DRE), and take one or more stool samples. These samples are analyzed for any occult (hidden) blood. This testing can find bleeding in the intestine, but results can be inaccurate because certain medicines or red meat may produce positive results that are really normal (false-positive results).

The doctor also looks inside the colon with a flexible tube called a colonoscope. This scope is passed through the rectum to see the whole colon. The doctor can see problem areas and biopsy (take samples of) these areas and remove any polyps. The samples are studied under a microscope to look for cancerous cells. Other tests, such as computed tomography (CT), of the abdomen and pelvis may be done to see whether cancer has moved to other parts of the body.

A newer screening test involves using CT only for the intestine (CT colonography). This test is also called virtual colonoscopy. Any possible problem areas found by CT colonography will need a follow-up colonoscopy to see whether they are cancerous.

DOs and DON'Ts in Diagnosing and Preventing Colon Cancer:

- ✓ **DO** realize the importance of colon screening for everyone, starting at age 50 or earlier for people who have family members with colon cancer.
- ✓ **DO** follow your doctor's advice.
- ✓ **DO** eat a high-fiber diet.
- ✓ **DO** watch your weight.
- ✓ **DO** exercise. Exercising can improve your overall health.
- ⊗ **DON'T** forget the importance of screening.
- ⊗ **DON'T** smoke.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

Colon Cancer Alliance
 Tel: (877) 422-2030
 Web: www.ccalliance.org
 American Cancer Society
 Tel: (800) ACS-2345
 Web: www.cancer.org