

FIT Kit Information

How do I get a screening test?

The Colon Cancer Prevention Program mails screening tests to Nova Scotians aged 50-74 who are registered with MSI.

When will I get my screening test?

Screening kits are mailed weekly based on a person's year of birth and date of birth.

- If you were born in an even year (e.g. 1950, 1964), you will receive your kit in even years (e.g. 2018, 2020).
- If you were born in an odd year (e.g. 1951, 1965), you will receive your kit in odd years (e.g. 2019, 2021).

You can expect to receive your kit shortly after your birthday.

What is the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)?

The screening kit (FIT) can find tiny amounts of blood that are invisible. The test is easy to do. There is no need to change your diet and you can do the test in your own home.

- Use the kit to collect a small sample of stool (poop).
- Mail the sample to the lab, where it is checked for blood.
- The results will be mailed to you and your doctor or other health care provider.

What does a normal test result mean?

It means that no traces of blood were found in your stool.

Does a normal test mean that I have no abnormal growths in my colon?

No. You may have a polyp that is too small to bleed right now, but it can grow, begin to bleed, and eventually turn into a cancer. It is very important to repeat the test the next time you get a kit in the mail. We will send you a kit every 2 years until you reach the age of 75. The kit will arrive in the mail shortly after you have an 'even' birthday (for example, at ages 56 or 64 or 72).

What does an abnormal test result mean?

An abnormal test means that traces of blood were found in your stool sample, but it does NOT mean you have cancer. In Nova Scotia, 60% of people with an abnormal test have the kind of polyps we are looking for, but very few are found to have cancer. Others with abnormal tests are found to have different causes of bleeding that are likely to need some form of treatment. If blood is found, we will contact you to book a colonoscopy. During this test the lining of the colon is checked to find the cause of the bleeding. If the screening test finds a colon cancer before it causes symptoms, treatment is much more effective.

Do all polyps become cancers?

No. Some kinds of polyps do not become cancers. Not even all adenomas will become a cancer. If we find and remove all the polyps that have a chance of becoming cancer, we can stop cancer before it starts!

Is there anything I can do to prevent colon cancer or to find it at an early stage?

Eat a healthy diet. Don't drink too much alcohol. Limit the amount of red and processed meat you eat. Be physically active. Unfortunately, even the healthiest lifestyle does not provide complete protection. The most effective way to prevent colon cancer, or to find it at an early stage, is the home screening test every 2 years.

What if I do not have any symptoms and no one in my family has colon cancer?

Most Nova Scotians who get colon cancer do not have a family history of the disease. Most people do not have symptoms when the disease is in the early stages. So, if you have no symptoms and no family history, now is the time to take the test!

What if I already have symptoms?

If you have any of the following symptoms, you should see your health care provider:

- Often see blood mixed with your stool.
- Have a change in your bowel habit that lasts for more than a few weeks.
- Have any other worrying symptoms.