



Colonoscopy vs. Cologuard®: What You Need to Know

Why Colon Cancer Screening Matters

Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers—but it is also **highly preventable** with proper screening. Early detection can save lives.

Screening is recommended starting at **age 45** for most adults (earlier if you have risk factors).

Option 1: Colonoscopy

What it is -

A procedure where a provider uses a thin, flexible camera to examine the entire colon.

How it works -

- Done at a surgery center or hospital with sedation for comfort
- The colon is fully visualized and **polyps can be removed at the same time**

Preparation -

- Special diet the day before
- Bowel prep solution to clean out the colon

How often?

- Every **10 years** if results are normal

Pros

- ✓ Most accurate screening test - detects at least 95% of cancers
- ✓ Detects and removes polyps immediately
- ✓ Long screening interval (10 years)

Cons

- ✗ Requires bowel prep, sedation, and time off work
 - ✗ Small risks (bleeding, perforation—rare)
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Option 2: Cologuard® (Stool DNA Test)

What it is

A non-invasive, at-home stool test that checks for abnormal DNA and hidden blood.

How it works

- Kit is mailed to your home, collect a stool sample, and send it back in prepaid packaging

Preparation

- **No prep or diet changes needed**

How often?

- Every **3 years** if results are normal

Pros

- ✓ Non-invasive and no bowel prep
- ✓ Done at home without sedation or time off work

Cons

- ✗ If positive, you **still need a colonoscopy**
 - ✗ Does not remove polyps and may not detect the presence of **pre-cancerous** polyps
 - ✗ Slightly less accurate than colonoscopy - detects 92-95% of cancers
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Which Option Is Right for You?

Colonoscopy may be best if you:

- Have a family history of colon cancer or polyps
- Have symptoms (bleeding, change in bowel habits, anemia)
- Want the most comprehensive screening

Cologuard may be a good option if you:

- Are average risk
- Prefer a non-invasive test
- Are not ready for a colonoscopy

Important Notes

- A **positive Cologuard test requires follow-up colonoscopy**
- If you develop symptoms, you should **not rely on stool testing alone**
- Insurance often covers both screening options (coverage varies)

Take the Next Step

The best screening test is the one that **gets done**.

If you're due for screening, let's talk about the best option for you.

We're here to help you stay proactive, healthy, and confident in your care.

Please reach out to us with any questions or to order your colon cancer screening.