

- ✔ Colon cancer is the second most common cancer in Manitoba.
- ✔ Screening can save lives.
- ✔ The time to check is before symptoms start.



What is colon cancer?

Cancer in the colon and rectum is often called colorectal cancer. In this brochure we use the term colon cancer to mean both colon and rectal cancers.

Small growths (polyps) can develop inside the colon and rectum. You can have these growths for a long time with no symptoms. Polyps can turn into cancer if they are not removed.

What causes colon cancer?

There is no one cause of colon cancer. The greatest risk factor for colon cancer is age. 93% of cases occur in men and women over the age of 50.

Other factors that may increase your risk include:

- ✔ a personal history of polyps or inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease).
- ✔ a strong family history such as 2 close family members (mother/father, sister/brother, son/daughter) who had colon cancer or 1 close family member who had colon cancer before age 60.
- ✔ lifestyle choices about your diet, exercise, alcohol and tobacco use.

Questions?

Please contact ColonCheck Manitoba:

#5-25 Sherbrook St.
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2B1

Telephone: (204) 788-8635
Toll Free: 1-866-744-8961
coloncheck@cancercare.mb.ca
www.coloncheckmb.ca

Pour recevoir cette brochure en français veuillez:

appeler au 788-8635 (à Winnipeg)
ou au 1-866-744-8961 (sans frais)
coloncheck@cancercare.mb.ca
www.coloncheckmb.ca



Colon Cancer

The time to *Check* is before you have symptoms.



What are the symptoms?

In the early stages of colon cancer, there are often no symptoms.

If you have any of the following symptoms you should see your health care provider immediately, as they may be symptoms of colon cancer:

- ✔ Rectal bleeding or any sign of blood after bowel movements.
- ✔ Unexplained weight loss, tiredness, exhaustion, abdominal pain or cramping.
- ✔ Persistent change in bowel habits such as:
 - Diarrhea or constipation for more than a few weeks.
 - Stools that are consistently more narrow than usual.
 - The feeling that you are not completely emptying your bowel.



What if no one in my family has had colon cancer?

Screening is still important because about 80% of people who get colon cancer have no family history of the disease.



How can I reduce my risk?

Take time to reduce your colon cancer risk:

- ✔ **Get screened:**
It is recommended that most people ages 50-74 do a home screening test every two years.
Some people may be at increased risk and need colon cancer screening before age 50 or need a different test called a colonoscopy.
- ✔ **Make healthy lifestyle choices:**
 - Eat well: Eat 7-10 serving of fruit and vegetables each day.
 - Drink alcohol in moderation (no more than 2 drinks/day for men and no more than 1 drink/day for women).
 - Limit the amount of red meat and processed meats that you eat.

Be physically active: be active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more. Activities such as gardening, walking and climbing stairs are great examples.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Don't smoke or use tobacco.



Why should I get screened?

You can feel well and not even know that you have polyps or colon cancer in its early stages.

Screening can:

- Find polyps before they turn into cancer.
- Detect colon cancer early when treatment is most successful.

There is a home screening test that has been shown to save lives from colon cancer.

How can I get screened?

- ✔ **Call ColonCheck Manitoba at 788-8635 or toll free at 1 (866) 744-8961 to request a home screening test.**
We will ask you a few questions to see if it is time to get screened.
OR
- ✔ **Talk to your health care provider about screening.**

What is the home screening test?

The home screening test is also called a Fecal Occult Blood Test or FOBT. It is a simple test that you do in your own bathroom. You place samples of your stool (poop) on a test card and send it to the lab where it is checked for hidden blood. Blood may be a sign of polyps or colon cancer.

