

What is Colorectal Cancer and Colorectal Cancer Screening?

- **"Colorectal"** means it's related to the colon and rectum, which are parts of the large intestine, or bowel.
- People usually start getting checked for colorectal cancer at age 50, but if you're at higher risk, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggest starting earlier.
- Colorectal cancer usually begins with a polyp growing in the colon or rectum, where it shouldn't be. It's the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
- Signs of colorectal cancer include changes in stool, bleeding from the rectum, stomach pain, and losing weight without planning to.
- Sometimes colorectal cancer doesn't show any symptoms at first.
- Getting screened early can help catch cancer before it spreads and might save lives.

Types of Colorectal Cancer Screening

Blood Test (FOBT):

- This test is done at home using a kit provided by the clinic.
- You collect stool samples on test cards and return them to a Share Ourselves clinic or a lab.
- The purpose of this test is to find hidden (occult) blood in your stool.
- It should be done once a year or as advised by your primary care provider.

Sigmoidoscopy:

- This test involves a flexible tube and camera to examine the lower part of your colon and rectum for any issues, polyps, or signs of cancer.
- It should be done every 5 years.

Colonoscopy:

- Like sigmoidoscopy, this test uses a flexible tube and camera, but it allows the doctor to view the entire colon and remove most polyps and some cancers.
- Colonoscopy may also be performed as a follow-up if something abnormal is found during other screening tests.
- It should be done every 10 years or as recommended by your primary care provider.

Colonoscopy Helpful Tips

Before the Exam:

- You will need to drink a liquid to clean out your bowel.
 - This will cause many bowel movements.
- You might experience skin irritation:
 - Apply ointment to the skin around the anus before drinking the liquid.
 - After each bowel movement, use wipes instead of toilet paper to wipe the skin

During the Exam:

- You will be given a medication that will make you feel relaxed and somewhat drowsy.
- A small amount of air used to expand your colon so the doctor can see it.
- You may feel mild cramping which can be reduced by taking slow, deep breaths.
- The doctor looks at your bowel with colonoscope.
- The procedure lasts from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

To schedule an appointment with your primary care provider at Share Ourselves, please call **949-270-2100**.