



Colorectal Cancer Screening

What **Providers** Need to Know

Latest Screening Guidelines

The **U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)** recently expanded recommended adult colorectal cancer screening to those aged 45 to 49 years.¹ These guideline changes reflect that:

- > **There has been a dramatic increase in colorectal cancer among those aged 40 to 49 years.** By expanding the recommendations and offering more screening options, we can help members live the healthiest lives possible.
- > **Screening detects colon cancer at an early stage when it is curable.** The five-year survival rate for those treated in early stages is 90% as compared to 25% for those whose cancer is detected in later stages.²

Who should get colorectal cancer screening?

All adults, **ages 45 to 75**, should be screened for colorectal cancer. For those **ages 76 to 85**, screening should be discussed with their provider based on preferences, overall health, and past screening history.

Those **younger than 45**, who have risk factors (e.g., family history, hereditary diseases, or type 2 diabetes), should discuss the need for screening with their providers.

What screening does SelectHealth cover?

SelectHealth covers colonoscopy and stool-based testing as follows:

Colonoscopy: Members should have a colonoscopy every 10 years or every 3 to 5 years if there are risk factors (e.g., a history of polyps, family history, or other factors; see information at right).

Stool-based Testing: These at-home tests of stool samples can be mailed into the lab for analysis (see instructions on [page 2](#)). **SelectHealth promotes fecal immunochemical testing (FIT)** because of its accuracy, cost, and frequency. FIT testing should be done every calendar year for eligible SelectHealth Advantage (Medicare) members and every 365 days for commercial members. See [page 2](#) for eligibility criteria.

Thanks to the new guidelines, many insurance plans cover colorectal cancer screenings with no copays (according to USPSTF) as mandated by the Affordable Care Act.

What risk factors are associated with colon cancer?

Colon cancer risk factors include:

- > **Age.** About 90% of the time, colorectal cancer occurs in adults older than 45.
- > **Family History.** A close relative who has had colon cancer or a colon polyp may increase risk.
- > **Ethnicity.** Rates of colorectal cancer are higher in African Americans compared with other races.
- > **Medical Conditions.** Inflammatory bowel disease may increase risk of developing colon cancer.
- > **Lifestyle.** Members can mitigate some risk factors (e.g., by stopping smoking, improving diet, being active, and keeping a healthy weight).

"We need each patient's help in preventing and screening for colorectal cancer, and we believe the best screening test is the one that gets done."

Dr. Nathan Merriman, Intermountain Gastroenterology Specialists

What is the process flow for screening?

The algorithm and associated notes on [page 2](#) provide a quick view of the care process associated with colorectal cancer screening.

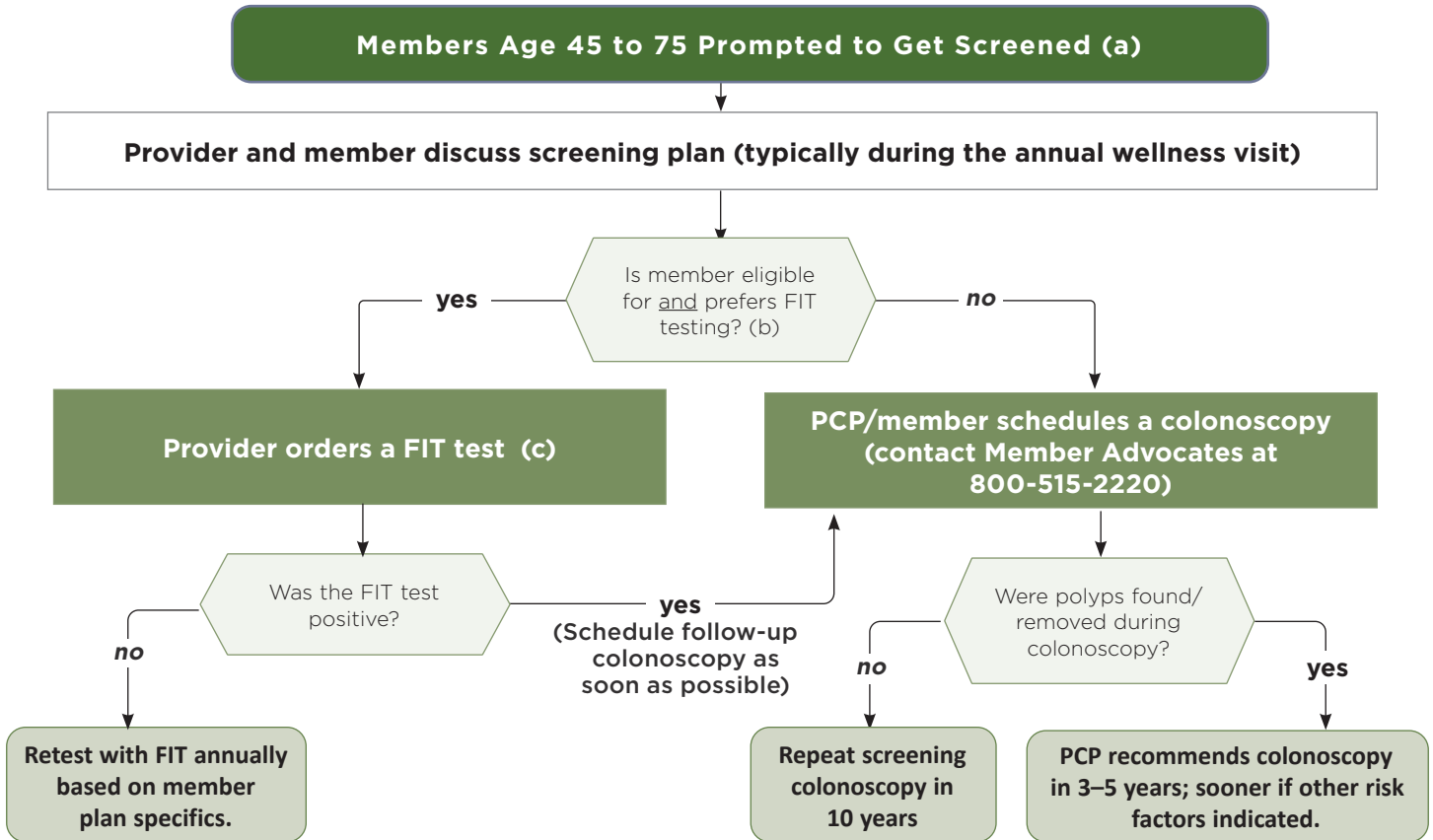
Be sure to contact SelectHealth Member Services (800-538-5038) to verify plan-specific coverage for preventive screening tests.

1. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. *Final Recommendation Statement - Colorectal Cancer: Screening*. May 18, 2021. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening#fullrecommendationstart>. Accessed September 13, 2021.
2. American Cancer Society. 2017. Colorectal Cancer Facts & Figures 2017-2019, Publication No. 861717. Available at <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures-2017-2019.pdf>. Accessed January 26, 2022.



Colorectal Cancer Screening, Continued

▶ **ALGORITHM:** COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING



ALGORITHM NOTES

(a) Member Screening Prompts

Members are prompted to get screened when:

- > Primary care providers review prevention screening status with members at annual wellness visits and develop a member-specific screening plan based on criteria.
- > SelectHealth sends reminder letters to members when records indicate that they are due for colorectal cancer screening.

(b) FIT Test Exclusions

- > History of polyps or colon cancer
- > Hemorrhoids
- > Ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- > Visible blood in the stool or on toilet paper
- > Currently taking anticoagulant (blood thinner) medication
- > A previously positive FIT test

(c) How to Order FIT Tests

- 1 Make sure that your clinic is set up to use Intermountain lab services. Sign up via the [Lab outreach services team](#).
- 2 Order FIT test kits at the [Central Lab website](#) (order online or download an order form to complete and send to client services).
- 3 Label the sample with patient information and include a requisition with the kit. **NOTE:** The lab cannot process the sample if it is not identified properly and comes without an order from the patient's provider.