



## The Medical **Bulletin**




### Investigation Corner

#### Screening for colorectal cancer in stool samples

- Colorectal cancer (cancer that develops in the colon and/or the rectum) is a disease in which abnormal cells in the colon or rectum divide uncontrollably, ultimately forming a malignant tumor.
- In the United States, colorectal cancer is most common in adults aged 65 to 74. Rates of new colorectal cancer cases are decreasing among adults aged 50 years or older due to an increase in screening and to changes in some risk factors
- However, incidence is increasing among younger adults (2–4) for reasons that are not known.
- The major risk factors for colorectal cancer are older age and having certain inherited conditions (such as Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis),
- several other factors have also been associated with increased risk, including a family history of the disease, excessive alcohol use, obesity, being physically inactive, cigarette smoking, and, possibly, diet.
- people with a history of inflammatory bowel disease (such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn disease) have a higher risk of colorectal cancer than people without such conditions.
- Several screening tests have been developed to help doctors find colorectal cancer before symptoms begin, when it may be more treatable.
- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical test (FIT).
- Both tests are used to find blood in the stool, which can be a sign of cancer. A positive test, means that blood is found in the feces
- There are 2 types of tests: guaiac (FOBT) and immunochemical (FIT). Cancers do not bleed continually, so FOBT must be done on several stool samples each year and should be repeated every year.
- Even then, this screening test provides a fairly small reduction in deaths from colorectal cancer, around 30% if done yearly and 18% if done every other year
- The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) has developed guidelines for colorectal cancer screening to help prevent cancer for people with an average risk. (updated 05/2021)
- Guaiac-based FOBT, every year, FIT, every year, Stool DNA test, as often as your doctor recommends

Reference - Approved by the Cancer. Net Editorial Board, 01/2021

**Types of Fecal Occult Blood Tests**

1.	2.	3.
<b>Gualac smear test</b>	<b>Fecal immunochemical test</b>	<b>Flushable reagent pad</b>
		
Collect 3 stool samples Smear on card, send to lab Color-changing chemical detects blood	Collect 1-3 stool samples Smear on card, send to lab Antibodies detect blood	Place a pad in toilet 3 days in a row Pad changes color if blood is detected Record results yourself

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