

# What is a Colonoscopy?



A colonoscopy is a screening test for colon cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends that you get your colon/rectum checked at 50 years of age and every 10 years after that.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer found in both men and women in the United States. The American Cancer Society's estimates for the number of colorectal cancer cases in the United States:

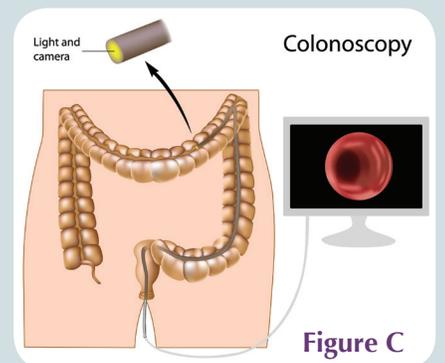
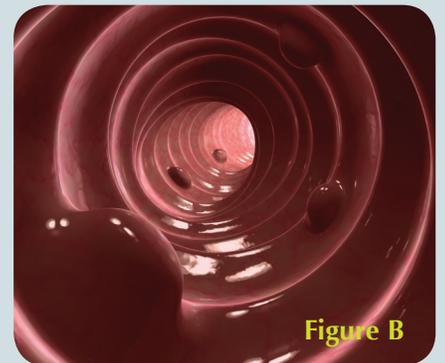
- 102,480 are new cases of colon cancer
- 40,340 are new cases of rectal cancer

Overall, the risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 20 (5.1%). This risk is slightly lower in women than in men. Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. when men and women are considered separately. It is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths when both sexes are combined. Colorectal cancer is expected to cause about 50,830 deaths this year.

A colonoscopy lets the doctor see inside your colon and rectum (Figure A). During the test the doctor is looking for polyps or other signs of cancer. Polyps are small growths and can become cancer over time (Figure B). The doctor uses a thin, flexible, hollow, lighted tube that has a tiny video camera on the end. This tube is called a colonoscope. The colonoscope is gently eased inside the colon and sends pictures to a TV screen. Small amounts of air are puffed into the colon to keep it open and let the doctor see it clearly (Figure C).

The test takes about 30 minutes. The doctor usually gives you medicine during the test to help you relax and sleep.

The doctor will talk to you after the test and let you know the results.



---

**If you have any questions about having a colonoscopy, call Enrollee Services. The phone number to call is 866-871-2305 or talk to your primary care provider.**

[www.ccaillinois.com](http://www.ccaillinois.com)