

Cologuard Testing vs Colonoscopy

WHAT IS COLOGUARD?

COMBINES:

- Not recommended as the primary form of colon cancer screening
- DNA testing for mutations (KRAS, NORG4, BMP3, B-Actin)
- Fecal Immunoglobulin Test (FIT) for hemoglobin (blood)
- Not indicated for high risk (family history of colon cancer, personal history of colon polyps, IBD) or symptomatic patients

Cologuard pros

- Non-invasive
- No bowel prep
- Covered by Medicare
- Convenient

Cologuard cons (Why isn't Cologuard recommended as primary colon cancer screening).

- Misses 8% of colorectal cancer
- Misses 60% of advanced polyps (these can become cancers)
- Cost \$500 vs FIT \$22 (Medicare)
- 13% false positive rate, increases with age
- Required every 3 years, may result in patient non-compliance
- Considered a 2nd Tier test, offer only if Colonoscopy or annual FIT is refused

**Not recommended if there are abnormal symptoms*

**Not recommended if there is a family history of colon cancer*

Colonoscopy pros

- Gold standard for detection of all cancerous and precancerous lesions
- Best Test for prevention of colorectal cancer and related deaths
- Covered by Medicare and less expensive than Cologuard every 3 years
- Every 10 years in average risk patients
- Only acceptable test in symptomatic patients (e.g. Iron def anemia, bleeding, change in bowel habits)
- Preferred, first tier test, U.S. Multi Society task force on Colorectal Cancer

Colonoscopy cons

- Invasive
- Requires bowel prep
- Operator dependent
- Sedated procedure
- Very small risk of complication

