

**Table 3. Considerations When Deciding with Your Doctor Which Test Is Right for You**

	Benefits	Performance & Complexity*	Limitations	Test Time Interval
<b>Visual Examinations</b>				
<b>Colonoscopy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines entire colon</li> <li>Can biopsy and remove polyps</li> <li>Can diagnose other diseases</li> <li>Required for abnormal results from all other tests</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> Highest <b>Complexity:</b> Highest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full bowelcleansing</li> <li>Can be expensive</li> <li>Sedation usually needed, necessitating a chaperone to return home</li> <li>Patient may miss a day of work.</li> <li>Highest risk of bowel tears or infections compared with other tests</li> </ul>	10 years
<b>Computed tomographic colonography (CTC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines entire colon</li> <li>Fairly quick</li> <li>Few complications</li> <li>No sedation needed</li> <li>Noninvasive</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> High (for large polyps) <b>Complexity:</b> Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full bowelcleansing</li> <li>Cannot remove polyps or perform biopsies</li> <li>Exposure to low-dose radiation</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if positive</li> <li>Not covered by all insurance plans</li> </ul>	5 years
<b>Double-contrast barium enema</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can usually view entire colon</li> <li>Few complications</li> <li>No sedation needed</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> High (for large polyps) <b>Complexity:</b> High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full bowelcleansing</li> <li>Some false-positive test results</li> <li>Cannot remove polyps or perform biopsies</li> <li>Exposure to low-dose radiation</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if abnormalities are detected</li> <li>Very limited availability</li> </ul>	5 years
<b>Flexible sigmoidoscopy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairly quick</li> <li>Few complications</li> <li>Minimal bowel preparation</li> <li>Does not require sedation or a specialist</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> High for rectum & lower one-third of the colon <b>Complexity:</b> Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial bowel cleansing</li> <li>Views only one-third of colon</li> <li>Cannot remove large polyps</li> <li>Small risk of infection or bowel tear</li> <li>Slightly more effective when combined with annual fecal occult blood testing</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if positive</li> <li>Limited availability</li> </ul>	5 years
<b>Stool Tests (Low-sensitivity stool tests, such as single-sample FOBT done in the doctor’s office or toilet bowl tests are not recommended.)</b>				
<b>Fecal immuno-chemical test (FIT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bowel cleansing or sedation</li> <li>Performed at home</li> <li>Low cost</li> <li>Noninvasive</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> Intermediate for cancer <b>Complexity:</b> Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires multiple stool samples</li> <li>Will miss most polyps</li> <li>May produce false-positive test results</li> <li>Slightly more effective when combined with a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if positive</li> </ul>	Annual
<b>High-sensitivity guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bowel cleansing</li> <li>Performed at home</li> <li>Low cost</li> <li>Noninvasive</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> Intermediate for cancer <b>Complexity:</b> Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires multiple stool samples</li> <li>Will miss most polyps</li> <li>May produce false-positive test results</li> <li>Pre-test dietary limitations</li> <li>Slightly more effective when combined with a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if positive</li> </ul>	Annual
<b>FIT-DNA test (Cologuard®)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bowel cleansing</li> <li>Can be performed at home</li> <li>Requires only a single stool sample</li> <li>Noninvasive</li> </ul>	<b>Performance:</b> Intermediate for cancer <b>Complexity:</b> Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will miss most polyps</li> <li>More false-positive results than other tests</li> <li>Higher cost than gFOBT and FIT</li> <li>Colonoscopy necessary if positive</li> </ul>	3 years, per manufacturer’s recommendation

\*Complexity involves patient preparation, inconvenience, facilities and equipment needed, and patient discomfort.