

Colonoscopy Screening: The “Ins and Outs” *By James Carpenter, MD*

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. In 2016, an estimated 134,000 persons will be diagnosed with this cancer and approximately 49,000 will die from it. It is most frequently diagnosed among the adult population between the ages of 65-74 years with the median age at death from colorectal cancer being 68 years of age.

These numbers are quite sobering and they highlight the need for appropriate colon cancer screening. The current United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) guidelines for colon cancer are outlined below.

Colorectal cancer screening should start at age 50 and continue until age 75. The new guidelines suggest that patients now ages 76-85 should be considered for continued screening based on the

individual's overall health. For example, continued screening is recommended for: 1) those who have never been screened before, 2) those who are healthy enough to undergo treatment if cancer is found, 3) patients that have no co-morbid conditions that would significantly limit their life expectancy, such as the coexistence of two or more disease processes.

The above USPSTF recommendations apply only to asymptomatic adults at average risk for colorectal cancer.

A caveat for starting colon cancer screening for people before the age of 50 would include, but not be limited to: 1) a personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps, 2) a personal history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, 3) a strong family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, 4) a known family

history of hereditary colorectal cancer syndromes.

Since there are multiple options for colorectal cancer screening these options can and should be discussed by the patient with their clinician to determine the best option based on the individual.

The options for colon cancer screening include:

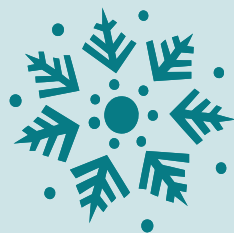
Tests that find polyps and cancer

- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- Colonoscopy every 10 years

Tests that mainly find cancer

- Guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) every year
- Fecal immunochemical test (FIT) every year
- Stool DNA test every 3 years (Cologard)

Holiday Hours



Thunderbird Internal Medicine will be closed December 24th - 26th and December 31st - January 2nd to celebrate the holidays. Sincere wishes to all for a happy and healthy holiday season!

LOCATIONS

Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1, #F-1 & #G-2
Glendale, Arizona 85306

Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Phoenix
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118
Phoenix, Arizona 85037