



Lebens Blicke

Foundation for early detection of colon cancer

Colon cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in Germany. More than 65,000 men and women are diagnosed with this condition every year, around 26,000 die of it every year. In other words, colon cancer accounts for six times as many deaths every year as road-traffic accidents. These figures are truly tragic, not least because no other form of cancer is as easy to avoid by screening.

Reason enough for the LebensBlicke Foundation and the support organization of the same name to get involved in educating people about colon cancer.

A further decline in the number of people affected by colon cancer can only be achieved if everybody joins in:

- the general public: each and every individual needs to realize that he or she is primarily responsible for his or her own health and to make use of the screening options available,
- doctors: they need to educate their patients thoroughly and actively pursue preventive medicine,
- politicians: they need to improve the framework within which preventive medicine is provided.

Make use of the available options for early detection of cancer and remember the LebensBlicke Foundation's motto: "Don't suffer – avoid it!"

Screening saves lives!

Colon cancer grows very slowly over several years. The treacherous thing about this disease is that it develops unnoticed, without the victim realizing that anything is wrong.

By the time symptoms develop – common symptoms include frequent alternation between diarrhea and constipation, painful defecation, abdominal cramps and visible blood on the stools – the condition is usually at an advanced stage, making it much more difficult to cure it.

So remember: Screening saves lives!

Since October 2002, the statutory health insurance providers have paid for a screening colonoscopy to be performed from your 55th birthday and, if the results are normal, for the colonoscopy to be repeated ten years later. If colon cancer is suspected, or if you have a family history of it, the health insurance provider will pay for the examination no matter how old you are. In addition, the statutory health insurance providers pay for your stool to be tested for hidden blood (chemical test for occult blood) once a year from the age of 50. If you do not have colonoscopy done, the statutory health insurance providers pay for the occult blood test to be done every two years from your 55th birthday.



Dagmar Berghoff

“As a committee member of the Association of Friends of the Jewish Hospital in Hamburg and, moreover, as a person whose parents both developed the condition, I am keen to support the prevention and early detection of colon cancer. In no other type of cancer is the chance of preventing the disease with almost absolute certainty as good as in colon cancer.”

Colon cancer – The facts at a glance

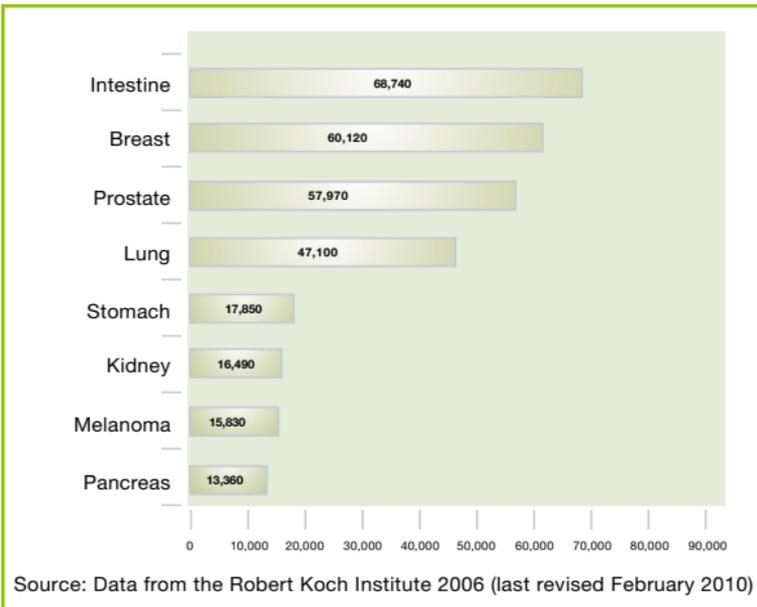
Did you know that ...

- ... the term “colon cancer” is nearly always used to describe cancer affecting the large intestine or the rectum?
- ... compared with other EU countries, the rate of new cases among both men and women is particularly high in Germany?
- ... between five and six in every hundred Germans, i.e. at least one in every 20 people, will develop colon cancer at some point in his or her life?
- ... almost one quarter of people with colon cancer have a family history, and in such cases they usually develop it well before they turn 60?
- ... colon cancer nearly always develops from initially harmless growths – known as polyps – in the wall of the intestine?

Colon cancer – The facts at a glance

Did you know that ...

- ... in Germany, colon cancer is the second most common form of cancer in women after breast cancer and the second most common form in men after prostate cancer? It is the most common form of cancer in both sexes taken together.



- ... intestinal polyps are very common in the population? One in three people over 55 years of age has polyps in his or her large intestine.
- ... deaths due to colon cancer could be largely avoided if people made regular use of the screening programs offered by the statutory health insurance providers?

What does screening for colon cancer involve?

1) Take the test and check your individual risk

You can use a questionnaire, also known as a self-administered test, consisting of just five questions to see whether you have a higher risk of developing colon cancer.

The questionnaire can be obtained from the Foundation's business office, and you can also complete it interactively on the internet at www.lebensblicke.de/fragebogen.

2) An occult blood test reveals hidden blood in your stool

Tumors or polyps in the intestine have numerous fine, very sensitive blood vessels. They can be injured very easily, and blood can then seep into your stool.

However, the quantities involved are usually so small that you can't see the blood with your naked eye. This is why it is referred to as occult (hidden) blood in the stool.

Nowadays various tests for occult blood are available which can be used to identify even the tiniest amounts of blood in stool. The test should be done every year from the age of 50, every two years from the age of 55 if you don't have colonoscopy done. You can get the test from your general practitioner, internist, gynecologist or urologist. You can also buy it at a pharmacy without a prescription.

What does screening for colon cancer involve?

3) Colonoscopy: Looking inside to be absolutely sure

If the test for occult blood in your stool is positive, i.e. if you have blood in your stool, colonoscopy, or internal examination of your intestine, will enable the cause to be identified with certainty. During colonoscopy, even small tumors and intestinal polyps can be identified and removed completely and painlessly while the examination is in progress. A specialist in stomach and intestinal diseases (e.g. a gastroenterologist) inserts a thin, flexible tube equipped with a small camera (photo chip) into the intestine and slowly pushes it further inside. This enables the specialist to see and examine the mucous membrane lining the intestine. Colonoscopy is a very low-risk procedure and takes around 20 minutes in total. It is not painful. Many doctors administer a sedative on request, so that you are in a sleepy, twilight state during the procedure. Colonoscopy is usually done on an outpatient basis. From the age of 55, statutory health insurance providers will also pay for colonoscopy to be performed even if you have not done a test for blood in your stool beforehand.

Prominent people who support the LebensBlicke Foundation:



Prof. Harald zur Hausen
German Cancer Research
Center, Heidelberg
Nobel prize-winner



Hannelore Kraft
State Premier
North Rhine-Westphalia



Dr. Theo Zwanziger
Former President of the
German Football Association

Who we are

“LebensBlicke – Foundation for the early detection of colon cancer” was founded in 1998. It is the oldest foundation in Germany dedicated to educating the population about screening for colon cancer.

The Foundation’s activities to promote early detection include the following:

- Public relations work in the media
- Publications
- Support for colon cancer screening programs organized by companies/organizations
- Promotion and organization of events
- Training
- Seminars, symposiums, conferences
- Benefit events, e.g. concerts
- Information for the public and post-graduate training for doctors focusing on early detection of colon cancer
- Award of the Colon Cancer Communication Prize in conjunction with the German Cancer Society
- VorsorgTheater (prevention theater group) of the LebensBlicke Foundation with the comedy “Alarm im Darm” [alarm from inside]
- Involvement in health-policy committees

Free phone hotline: 0800 - 22 44 22 1

LebensBlicke

Foundation for early detection of colon cancer

Schuckertstraße 37, 67063 Ludwigshafen

Phone 0621 / 69 08 53 88 • Fax 0621 / 69 08 53 89

www.lebensblicke.de

e-mail: stiftung@lebensblicke.de

**You can support the work done
by LebensBlicke with a donation.**

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