



Lebens Blicke

Foundation for early detection of colon cancer

Take the test
to find out your
individual risk of
colon cancer

Information from the LebensBlicke Foundation.

Colon cancer is the most common type of cancer and the second-most common type of cancer leading to death in Germany. Some 65,000 men and women are diagnosed with this condition every year, around 26,000 die of it every year. These deaths could be largely avoided if people underwent the appropriate screening and early detection examinations.

Colon cancer can be prevented, but how?

The prevention of colon cancer, like any health program, is a life-long process. The two vital aspects in avoiding colon cancer are

- prevention and
- early detection.

Prevention means, in a nutshell, living healthily: plenty of physical activity, a health-oriented diet, maintaining or working towards a normal weight, no nicotine, alcohol only in moderation. More than half of all cases of colon cancer could be avoided by adopting these measures.

Early detection means discovering the disease or the changes preceding it at an early stage. This is done with a test for blood in the stool and, if necessary, colonoscopy. During colonoscopy the growths that lead to colon cancer can be removed immediately, thus preventing cancer from developing.

Modern screening for colon cancer

The level of knowledge in the general population about colon cancer is high. Nowadays, 85% of people over the age of 15 are aware that there are good ways of screening for colon cancer. Equally, 85% of people over 50 state that they have already thought about the subject of colon cancer (source: survey carried out by the LebensBlicke Foundation, 2008).

The number of new cases of colon cancer is increasing (as a result of increased and better diagnosis and an aging population), yet the number of people dying of colon cancer is in decline. As a result, the survival rate for colon cancer has increased substantially. Just ten years ago it was below 50%, now it is well over 60%.

These figures are good news, but in spite of extensive awareness campaigns, three out of four people questioned still think that they don't need to have a screening examination as long as their colon is not causing problems. It's a misconception that can cost lives.

Our aim is to make sure that this misconception doesn't threaten your life too. Take the first step by completing the following test. Just five questions, but they can put your mind at rest. You can do a lot for your health by spending two minutes on the test.

The first time you answer “yes” to a question, follow the recommendation under that question.

The information provided under the other questions is not relevant for you. If you have any questions, talk to your general practitioner. Take this questionnaire with you when you see him/her.

1. I have seen blood in my stool in the past 12 months.

yes

Blood in your stool is a warning sign. No matter how old you are, the cause must be investigated in a colonoscopy procedure. Please see your general practitioner about this. He/she will refer you to a gastroenterologist.

no

Please answer the next question.

2. One or more relatives (parents, siblings, children, grandparents) developed or died of colon cancer.

yes

You may be at increased risk of developing colon cancer. We recommend that you undergo colonoscopy no later than ten years before the age at which your relative fell ill. Please see your general practitioner about this. Testing your stool for blood is not worthwhile.

no

Please answer the next question.

3. I have had a colonoscopy within the past three years or I take part in the screening program for colon cancer every year or I am being treated by a specialist in gastroenterology.

yes

Congratulations! You're clearly well informed about colon cancer and are already doing the right thing. Follow the recommendations given by your doctor.

no

Please answer the next question.

4. I am 55 or older.

yes

From the age of 55 you are entitled to have a colonoscopy. The costs are paid by both statutory and private health insurance providers. If you don't want to have colonoscopy done at the moment, you should at least have your stool tested for blood. You can get the test from your general practitioner or buy it in a pharmacy.

no

Please answer the next question.

5. I am between 50 and 54 years old.

yes

We recommend you to have your stool tested for blood. You can get the test from your general practitioner or buy it in a pharmacy.

no

You don't need to do anything for the time being. Repeat this self-administered test in one year's time.

Do some people have a greater risk of colon cancer?

The risk of developing colon cancer increases with increasing age.

However, all adults can develop colon cancer at any age!

Some groups of people have a particularly high risk of developing colon cancer. There are three risk categories:

1. General risk

- Poor diet, e.g.
 - ▶ too much (especially red) meat and animal fats and
 - ▶ not enough fruit, vegetables and other high-fiber foods
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Increasing age is also a risk factor

2. Familial or genetic risk

A familial risk is always present if a person's grandparents, parents or siblings have developed or died of colon cancer. This is why it is important for young people, in particular, to take a good look at their "family tree". Question 2 contains more information about this aspect.

If other types of cancer are also common in your family it may be advisable to seek genetic counseling.

3. Risk due to existing medical conditions

There are a number of medical conditions which may be associated with a higher risk of colon cancer. These include in particular:

- Severe inflammation of the intestinal mucosa (chronic inflammatory intestinal diseases)
- Diabetes

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Since 1998 the LebensBlicke Foundation has been fighting colon cancer by carrying out research, motivating people to use screening programs, and distributing information.

You can support our work by making a donation. Endowments are also welcome.

Many thanks!

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This information was provided by the LebensBlicke Foundation and your doctor.



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