

Cancer Screening Programs and COVID-19 Service Changes

Colon Screening Q+A

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1. Are colonoscopy procedures available at this time in BC?

- Screening colonoscopies for asymptomatic people with a family history of colon cancer or personal history of adenomas are non-urgent, non-emergent procedures.
- Follow-up colonoscopies for people who have had an abnormal fecal immunochemical test (FIT) result are also non-urgent, non-emergent procedures.
- Non-urgent, non-emergent colonoscopies in BC are temporarily suspended in order to:
 - Reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the procedure and allow hospitals to better respond to the potential for a surge of COVID-19 patients requiring acute care.
 - Support social distancing, which will assist in efforts to minimize COVID-19 transmission in healthy people.
 - Ensure that limited colonoscopy resources during the COVID-19 outbreak are available to patients with urgent and emergent needs.
- If you are experiencing symptoms such as blood in your stool, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits, or unexplained weight loss, talk to your health care provider about diagnostic testing you may need to determine the cause of these symptoms. FIT is not appropriate for patients with these symptoms.

2. I have an existing appointment, should I come in for my colonoscopy procedure?

- Your Health Authority will contact you if there are any changes to your appointment.
- If you have questions about your appointment, use the information provided to you at the time of your appointment being booked to contact your Health Authority directly.

3. Are fecal immunochemical tests (FIT) available at this time in BC?

- The FIT is a non-urgent, non-emergent screening test for people without symptoms.
- FIT kits are not currently being distributed by the laboratories for the following reasons:
 - If you receive an abnormal result, you will not be booked for a follow-up colonoscopy until non-urgent, non-emergent services resume in BC. At this time, colonoscopies are being cancelled or re-booked to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the procedure and to allow hospitals to better respond to the potential for a surge of COVID-19 patients requiring acute care.
 - Not going to a lab to pick up or drop off a FIT kit supports social distancing, which will assist in efforts to minimize COVID-19 transmission in healthy people.

- Please do not visit your health care provider for the sole purpose of obtaining a lab requisition for FIT. Instead, wait until the FIT is available again.
- If you are experiencing symptoms such as blood in your stool, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits, or unexplained weight loss, talk to your health care provider about diagnostic testing you may need to determine the cause of these symptoms. FIT is not appropriate for patients with these symptoms.

4. I have other tests indicated on my lab requisition.

- If there are other tests recommended for you on the requisition you should go to the lab to have those tests completed.
- You will not be given a FIT kit at this time.
- The lab will provide you with a copy of the requisition for you to bring back to pick up a kit when non-urgent, non-emergent services, including FIT testing, resume.

5. What should I do if I have a FIT kit but have not submitted it to the lab?

- If you've already picked up a FIT and completed it, do not return the kit. Do not dispose of the FIT in household garbage. Once non-urgent, non-emergent services are in place again, return the used FIT to the lab for safe disposal and you will be provided with a new FIT kit to repeat the test.
- If you've picked up a FIT kit and have not completed it, do not complete the test. Wait until non-urgent, non-emergent services are in place again and complete and return the kit at that time.

6. When can I start taking the FIT again?

- It is uncertain how long the FIT testing suspension will be in place. We anticipate these changes will be effect for at least the next 8 weeks – until the end of May. Health services will be reassessed at that time to determine if non-urgent, non-emergent services can be provided again.
- Updates or changes will be posted here, check back any time.

7. I recently submitted my FIT to the lab. Will I still receive results?

- Yes, if you recently submitted a FIT to the lab, then you and your health care provider will still receive results.
- Results will continue to be available on 'myehealth' if you are signed up for that service, and the Colon Screening Program will continue to mail you your result notice.

8. I received an abnormal result/my result indicated further follow-up is needed, what will happen now?

- Your health authority has been sent a referral for pre-colonoscopy assessment. As the Health Authority staff are able, you will be contacted by phone regarding pre-colonoscopy assessment.

- Once non-urgent, non-emergent services resume in BC you will be contacted about when your colonoscopy will be booked.

9. I'm currently experiencing symptoms.

- Screening is only recommended for people who are not experiencing symptoms.
- Symptoms can include blood in your stool, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits, or unexplained weight loss. If you are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your health care provider about the diagnostic testing you may need to determine the cause of these symptoms. FIT is not appropriate for patients with these symptoms.

10. I would still like to keep up-to-date with my colon cancer screening. Is there an alternative test available?

- No. You should complete the test when non-urgent, non-emergent services in BC can be resumed.

11. I'm a primary care provider. What should I know?

- Reminder notices for screening have been suspended at this time.
- Patients with booked follow-up appointments at health authority facilities will be contacted directly by the facility regarding cancellations or rebooking.
- Patients with symptoms should be referred directly to a specialist for assessment. FIT is not required.

12. Where can I get more information?

- You can call 1-877-702-6566 if you have questions or visit this website at any time for updates.