



# Mount Sinai *The Tisch Cancer Institute*

Community Newsletter October 2017

Cancer Screening

## What is cancer?

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body. Cancer develops when the body's normal control mechanism stops working. Cells do not die and continue to grow out of control, forming new, abnormal cells. These extra cells may form a mass of tissue, called a tumor. Some cancers, such as leukemia, do not form tumors. Cancer may occur anywhere in the body.

## Catching it early: Prevention and screening

Keys to fighting cancer are avoiding its causes and detecting it early. Today, we have many screening tests and prevention strategies to help detect cancer early and reduce the risk of getting it. Depending on the type of cancer, there are multiple ways to get screened. Screening test recommendations can also vary by age and gender. Talk to your healthcare provider about the different cancer prevention and screening options for you.

## Screening is highly recommended in several cancers

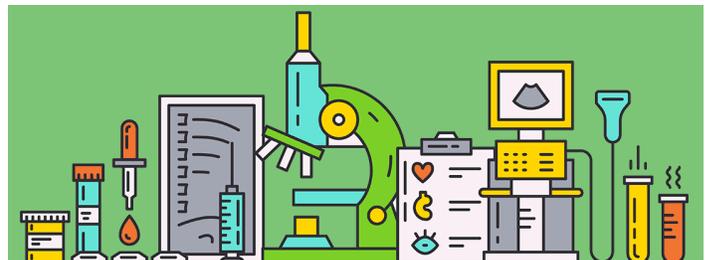
**Colorectal Cancer (CRC):** CRC is a cancer that develops in the large bowel (colon or rectum). It is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in the U.S. For most people, it is recommended to have your first CRC screening test at age 50. Among the different screening tests for CRC, the most common and most effective is a colonoscopy. A **colonoscopy** examines the entire colon and allows for the diagnosis and removal of polyps (pre-tumor lesions) in a single visit. If the test results are normal, your next visit could be in 10 years. You should talk to your doctor about which CRC test is best for you.

**Breast Cancer:** Breast cancer is a cancer that develops in breast tissue and often begins in ducts or lobules. Breast cancer can occur at any age, but the risk increases with age. It is the most common cancer in American women. About 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. However, also men are at risk. If caught early, the 5 year survival rate is greater than 95%. A **mammogram** is an effective way to screen for breast cancer. It takes X-ray pictures of the breast to detect tumors at an early stage. It is recommended that women ages 40 and older get a screening mammogram every year.

**Cervical Cancer:** Cervical cancer is a cancer that develops in the cervix, the lower most part of the uterus. The key risk factor for cervical cancer is Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection. HPV infection is a common sexually transmitted infection but can be prevented with the HPV vaccine. The vaccine is recommended for boys and girls starting at age 11 or 12. Talk to your children's provider about getting them vaccinated for HPV. Boys should also be vaccinated to reduce HPV infection in women and because HPV causes also cancer in the tonsil in both sexes.

For most women between the ages of 21 and 65, a **Pap test** is an effective way to screen for cervical cancer. During a Pap test, cells from the cervix are collected with a small brush and analyzed. If the results are normal, your doctor may recommend that you return for your next Pap test in one to five years, depending on your age.

**Prostate Cancer:** Prostate cancer is a cancer that develops in the prostate gland, located below the bladder in males. A PSA blood test can be used to detect prostate cancer and can be done with or without a digital rectal exam, however, the potential benefit in terms of reducing mortality from prostate cancer depends on individual characteristics. How often you are tested therefore will depend on your PSA level, your age and your family history. Because there is some controversy about this test, men should discuss with their providers about the risks and benefits of the PSA blood test starting at age 50. If you are African American or have a father or brother diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65, it is recommended that you start the discussion by age 45.



## RESOURCES

For more information, visit <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cancer/services>