

Breast Cancer Screening

A mammogram is the screening test for breast cancer. It takes an X-ray picture of the breast. This is used to help detect cancer early – sometimes 3 years before it can be felt on a breast exam. Depending on how dense your breast tissue is, you may also need a breast ultrasound or a breast MRI.

Procedure:

A special X-ray machine is used to do the mammogram. A technician positions your breast on a plastic plate and puts pressure on it with another plate from above. This flattens the breast. The process takes about 20 minutes. You may feel some discomfort.

Results:

Results usually come back in 1-2 weeks. A radiologist reviews them and lets you and/or your provider know the results. An abnormal result does not always mean cancer. However, it may mean you need further tests or to see a specialist.

Cervical Cancer Screening

The HPV test and Pap test play vital roles in finding cervical cancer early, or even preventing it. Finding cancer early, before symptoms arise, means it is easier to treat.

HPV and Pap Test:

- The HPV test finds human papillomavirus, which can cause cell changes on the cervix.
- The Pap test (or Pap smear) detects early cell changes (known as precancerous changes) on the cervix. These changes could progress to cervical cancer if left untreated.

Procedure:

Both tests are done in a doctor's office or clinic. During the Pap test, you lie on your back and the provider uses an instrument to examine the inside of the vagina and cervix. Then, using a brush, they collect cells and mucus and send these to a lab for testing.

Results

Results take up to 3 weeks to come back. Abnormal results do not always mean cancer. However, you need to follow up with your provider promptly. You may need to have more tests.

Colon/Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colon/colorectal cancer typically starts from abnormal growths called polyps in the colon or rectum. These growths can turn into cancer if they are not removed. There are two types of colon cancer screening tests. Stool tests (also known as FOBT or FIT) detect blood in the stool that may not be visible otherwise. Colonoscopies allow doctors to detect and remove polyps. The goal is to remove any polyps before they develop into cancer. Screenings also help to detect colorectal cancer early, when treatment is most effective. You and your provider will choose the screening method that is right for you.

Procedures:

- FOBT/FIT: Your provider will give you a test kit to collect samples of your stool at home. You will be told to return the kit to the doctor's office or send it directly to a lab for testing.
- Colonoscopy: Your provider will insert a flexible tube with a camera to look inside your rectum and colon for polyps. You will be sedated during the procedure. If polyps are found, your doctor will either remove them or take a sample.

Results:

- FOBT/FIT: Negative FOBT/FIT results mean no blood was found in your stool. If blood is found, you will need to have a colonoscopy.
- Colonoscopy: If colonoscopy results are normal, your doctor will let you know right away. If any polyps are removed, they will be sent to a lab for testing. Test results may take a few days.

Lung Cancer Screening

A low-dose CAT scan (LDCT) can detect lung cancer before symptoms arise. This is when it is easier to treat.

Procedure

During the scan, you lie on a table that moves through a ring-shaped CAT scanner. You will need to briefly hold your breath as the machine captures images. The process is painless and only lasts a few minutes. You may need to undress and wear a gown. You must take off any metal objects such as jewelry, and let the technician know if you have any medical implants.

Results

A radiologist examines the LDCT scan and shares the results with your provider. If any changes are observed, further testing may be required. LDCT scans can reveal abnormal growths called 'nodules.' While many of these nodules are not cancerous, they still need to be tested. If the nodules are too small to be tested, they must be monitored to ensure you receive the appropriate treatment if needed.

Prostate Cancer Screening

A PSA blood test measures the level of a protein called prostate-specific antigen (PSA) in your blood. PSA protein is often high in people with prostate cancer. The PSA blood test itself does not directly detect prostate cancer. However, it identifies people who may need further testing.