



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

For the early detection of cancers

Your invitation for colorectal cancer screening



How does the population screening work?

In the colorectal cancer population screening programme, we check for blood in your stool (poo). Blood in your stool could be linked to colorectal cancer or precancerous tissue changes. To take part in the population screening, you use a stool test kit at home and return it by post. We will let you know within 10 working days if follow-up diagnostic testing is needed. The follow-up diagnostic test is a visual examination of the colon. This is called a colonoscopy.

The population screening has advantages and disadvantages. You decide if you want to take part. The information in the leaflet will help you decide.

Why is there a colorectal cancer population screening programme?

Every year, around 12,000 people get colorectal cancer. Most of the people who get colorectal cancer are between 55 and 75 years old. The aim of the population screening is to detect colorectal cancer at the earliest possible moment – even before someone has symptoms. This way, the chance of a successful treatment is greater. In many cases, it also means the treatment is less painful.

The population screening can also help us find polyps in the colon. Removing polyps can prevent colorectal cancer.

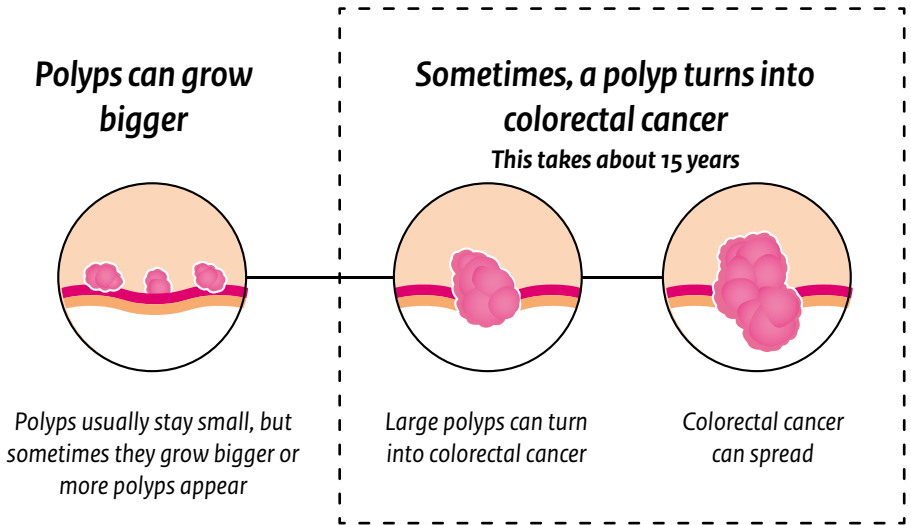
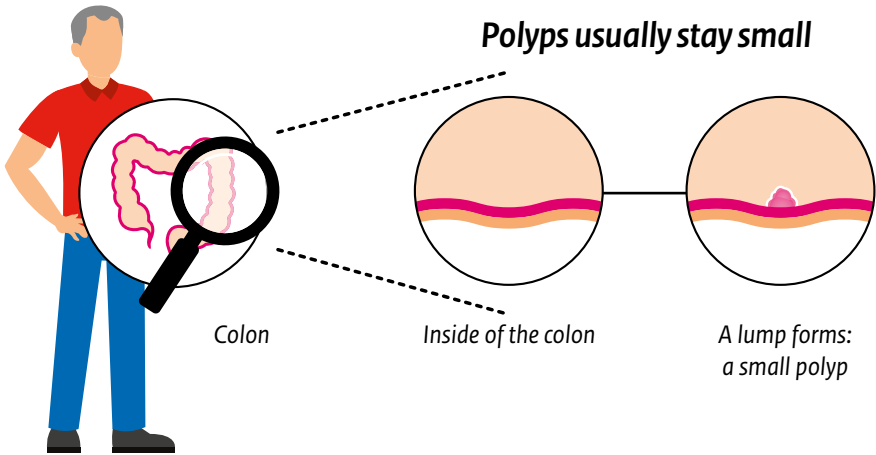
We will send you an invitation for the colorectal cancer population screening programme every 2 years. This way, the chance of finding polyps at an early stage is greater. This means that fewer people will get colorectal cancer.

Contact your GP if you are having colon problems

Do you see blood and/or mucus in your stool? Or have you had any of the following symptoms for a long time: a permanent change in the pattern of your bowel movement, less interest in food, unintentional weight loss, symptoms in your belly (such as pain, cramps or feeling bloated) or constantly feeling tired? If so, you should not use the stool test kit, but contact your GP. Your GP can talk to you about the most suitable test in your situation.

What causes colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer starts as a small lump on the inside of the colon. This is called a polyp. Most polyps are harmless, but some turn into colorectal cancer. Most of the time, people do not feel the polyps.



Who is it for?

The colorectal cancer population screening programme is for everyone between the ages of 55 and 75. Polyps and colorectal cancer are more common among people older than 55. That is why, after your 55th birthday, you can take part in the population screening every 2 years. When people are older than 75, the population screening is unlikely to find deadly colorectal cancer. For this group, taking part in the population screening could lead to unnecessary treatment. Also, screening and treatment are more difficult for people in this age group than for younger people.

Who is it not for?

In some cases, it is less useful for you to take part in the population screening. Or a different type of test might be better for you. Maybe you have already had a colonoscopy in the last 5 years. Or maybe you are in very poor health. Talk to your GP about the best option in your case. You should also talk to your GP if you might be at a higher risk of colorectal cancer because you have certain genes, because it runs in your family or because you have chronic colon infections.

Would you like more information? Go to www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen.



You decide if you want to take part

The population screening leads to fewer cases of colorectal cancer and fewer deaths from this disease. Just like any other medical test, the population screening also has disadvantages. Are you already sure that you do not want to have a colonoscopy? Or that you do not want to be treated if you have cancer? If so, please think carefully about taking part in the population screening. You can talk to your GP if you are unsure about what to do.

The population screening does not give you 100% certainty

There is always a chance that colorectal cancer will be missed. It is also possible that you will get colon problems that have to do with colorectal cancer between two tests. That is why you should always go to the GP if you have symptoms.

You may feel worried

If follow-up diagnostic testing is needed, this does not necessarily mean that you have colorectal cancer. There may also be other reasons for blood in your stool, such as haemorrhoids or harmless polyps.

Harmless polyps will be removed as well

If the doctor finds any polyps during follow-up diagnostic testing, they will usually remove the polyps immediately. Most polyps are harmless. This could mean that the doctor will remove polyps even if they would not have given you any trouble.

There is a chance of complications during follow-up diagnostic testing

All follow-up diagnostic testing is done very carefully, but complications can happen. There is a very small chance of death. You can find more information about this at www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl under Wel of niet meedoen? (Take part or not?)

Do you not want to take part in the population screening?

You can opt out of screening by logging into 'My screening' with your DigiD (see page 9). You can also call or send an email to the Centre for Population Screening. You can find the telephone number and email address at the top of the letter with this leaflet.

For more information about the advantages and disadvantages of the population screening, go to www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen.

The screening: from test to result

Polyps and colorectal cancer can lead to small bleeds.
We use a test to see if there is blood in your stool.

1 The stool test

Read the instructions first before using the stool test kit.

Do you want to see how the test works?

Watch a video about the test at

www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen.

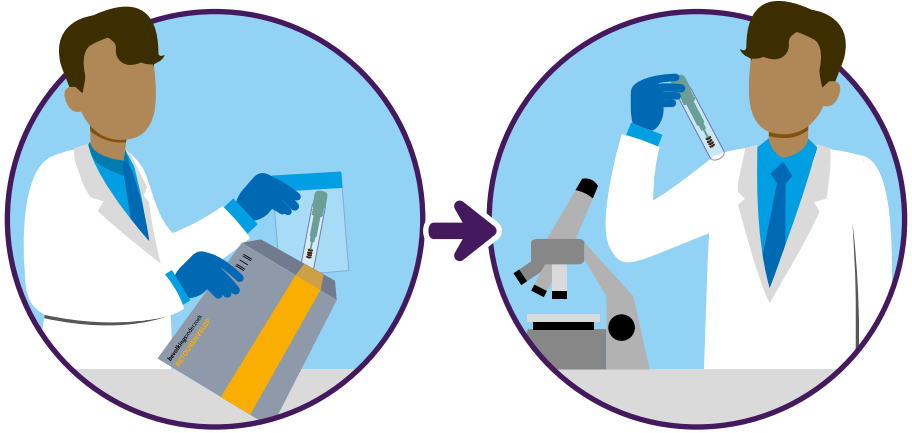


Did you do the test?

Use the grey envelope to send the stool test kit to the laboratory.

2 Examination in the laboratory

Blood in the stool is often impossible to see. That is why the stool is examined in a laboratory.



3 The result

We will send you a letter with the result within 10 working days. This result letter will tell you if follow-up diagnostic testing is needed.



What could the result be?

The following two results are possible:

1 No follow-up diagnostic testing needed

We will send you a new invitation in 2 years' time, unless you are older than 75.



95 out of 100 participants
do not need follow-up
diagnostic testing

2 Follow-up diagnostic testing needed

You will be referred for follow-up diagnostic testing. Follow-up diagnostic testing consists of an interview and a colonoscopy. During the colonoscopy, the doctor looks at the inside of your colon.



5 out of 100 participants
need follow-up diagnostic
testing

You can find more information about the colonoscopy at www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen.

Your data

Privacy

To carry out the population screening, we need to process your data. We follow privacy laws when we do this. The municipality has given us your name, address and date of birth. This way, we can send you an invitation.

We also process your data for the test and the test results. Your test results can help to improve the population screening.

The results from all participants combined give us much information. That is why we also exchange data with research and care facilities. The privacy statement on the website explains what happens to your data.

Exchange of data with your GP

Your GP will not get your result automatically. If you want us to tell your GP if follow-up diagnostic testing is needed, you will need to give your GP's name and address to the Centre for Population Screening. Do this before you send the test. You can call us or send us an email. You can find the telephone number and email address at the top of the letter with this leaflet. You can also give us your GP's information through 'My screening' at www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en. If you do this, we will also tell your GP if you had a bad result and have not responded to the letter referring you to the hospital.

What will happen to my stool test?

After the laboratory has examined your test, it will be destroyed. Sometimes, we keep stool tests for a few days to help us monitor and improve the quality of the population screening. After a few days, these tests are destroyed as well.

Objection

If you do not want your data and/or stool test kit to be used for quality analysis or scientific research after the population screening, you can object to the Centre for Population Screening. It is important to do this before you take part in the population screening. For more information about the privacy statement and how to object, go to www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en/privacy.

My screening

You can view and change your personal data online. Go to 'My screening' at www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en and log in with your DigiD.

More information

You can find more information about the population screening at www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen.

More information about colorectal cancer

www.kwf.nl/darmkanker

www.kanker.nl/darmkanker

www.mlds.nl/darmkanker

www.thuisarts.nl/darmkanker

Do you have any questions, tips, complaints or compliments about the colorectal cancer population screening programme?

The Centre for Population Screening coordinates the population screening on behalf of the government. Do you have any questions, tips, complaints or compliments about the test? Please contact the Centre for Population Screening.

You can find the contact details at www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en and in your invitation letter.



***bevolkings*onderzoek**

A population screening is a free medical examination for early detection of a disease. The government organises three population screening programmes for cancer: for cervical cancer, breast cancer and colorectal cancer. These diseases can be detected early, even before you get symptoms.

We have paid much care and attention to the content of this leaflet. You cannot derive any rights from it.

Information in other languages

You can read this information in English/Turkish/Arabic/Ukrainian/Russian at:
Bu bilgiyi Türkçe olarak şu internet sitesinde okuyabilirsiniz:

يمكنكم قراءة هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية على الموقع:

Ви можете прочитати цю інформацію українською на веб-сайті:
Вы можете прочитать эту информацию на русском языке на веб-сайте:



www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen

We wrote this leaflet with help from general practitioners (NHG), gastroenterologists (NVMDL), the Colorectal Cancer Foundation, the Dutch Stomach, Liver and Bowel Foundation, the Dutch Cancer Society (KWF) and the Centre for Population Screening.



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