



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

# The follow-up consultation after population screening for colorectal cancer





## Why this leaflet?

### **You took part in the screening for colorectal cancer**

We found blood in your stool (poo).

Blood in your stool can have several causes.

It could be the result of polyps or colorectal cancer.

A polyp is a lump on the inside of the colon. There may also be other causes.

### **A follow-up consultation is needed**

The follow-up consultation is intended to identify the cause of the blood in your stool.

The follow-up consultation consists of 2 parts:

1. You will first have an admission appointment in the hospital with a doctor or nurse. During this appointment, they will decide with you whether you will have an endoscopic examination. The result letter with this leaflet contains the details of this appointment.
2. Next, you will have the endoscopic examination, if that is possible for you. The hospital will make a separate appointment for this. During this procedure, your large intestine will be examined from the inside. This examination is called a colonoscopy.

In this leaflet, you can read more about the follow-up consultation.

If you still have questions after reading this leaflet, please visit [www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl) or contact your GP.

## The screening in 5 steps

### 1 Result letter with appointment

With this leaflet, you have received a letter with the results of the population screening.

This letter contains the details of an admission appointment at the hospital. It also tells you how to select a different date or hospital.



### 2 Contact your GP

The hospital needs your medical data, but it will not receive this automatically. You should therefore ask your GP for information about your:

- Medicines;
- Allergies;
- Medical history.

You must bring this information with you to the hospital.

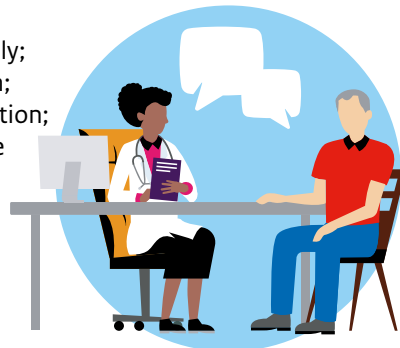


### 3 Admission appointment at the hospital

At the hospital, you will meet with a doctor or nurse to discuss:

- Your health;
- If you are taking any medicines;
- Whether there is colorectal cancer in your family;
- The procedure for the endoscopic examination;
- Whether you can have an endoscopic examination;
- If and when an appointment for this procedure will be arranged.

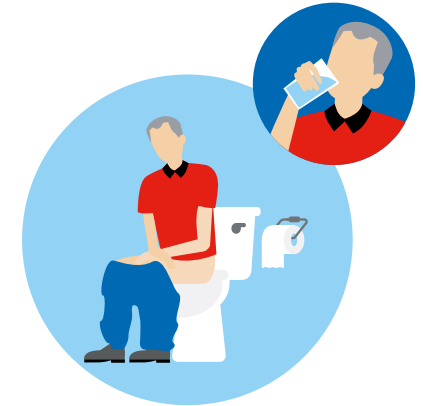
You can think about these points at home beforehand. The appointment will take around 30 minutes.



### 4 Preparing at home

For the endoscopic examination, your intestines need to be clean and empty. This allows the doctor to properly examine your large intestine. That is why you will need to drink a laxative at home beforehand. This will make you go to the toilet often, and it can cause intestinal cramps.

During the admission appointment, you will learn more about preparing for the procedure at home. You will also receive a prescription to collect the laxative from a pharmacy.



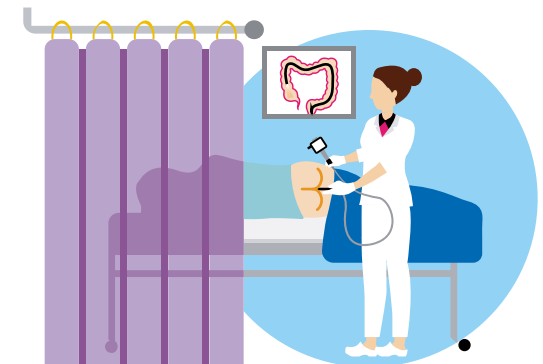
### 5 Endoscopic examination at the hospital

The endoscopic examination (colonoscopy) is designed to examine the inside of your large intestine. The doctor uses an endoscope, a tube about as thick as a finger. The doctor gently slides the endoscope through the anus into the intestine. The endoscope has a small camera with a light. This allows the doctor to see if there are polyps in your intestine.

The procedure will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

#### Mild sedation

Many people find the insertion of the endoscope uncomfortable. Advancing the endoscope through the large intestine can sometimes be painful, especially around the bends of your intestine. For this reason, you may be given a mild sedative and/or a painkiller. This will be explained to you during the admission appointment.



## After the endoscopic examination

After the colonoscopy, you can recover from the procedure and any sedation you may have been given. When everything goes well, and you are fully awake again, you will be told what the doctor has observed. You may then have something to eat and go home.

## What if the doctor sees a polyp?

If the doctor detects a polyp during the procedure, they can usually remove the polyp immediately. The doctor may also remove a small piece of tissue from the inside of the large intestine for further laboratory testing. You will get the results after about 1 week.

## Problems during an endoscopic examination

Every endoscopic examination is performed with great care. However, problems can sometimes arise:

- When a polyp is removed, it can cause bleeding. The doctor can often stop the bleeding during the endoscopic examination.
- There is a very small risk of perforation or tearing in the large intestine. This occurs very rarely.
- A hole or a tear in the large intestine may cause faeces (poo) to enter the abdominal cavity. This can cause peritonitis (an infection of the lining of the abdomen).

On average, 3 serious complications occur per 10,000 endoscopic examinations. An endoscopic examination has a very small risk of death.

More information on this can be found at [www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl) under 'Results'.

## Symptoms after the endoscopic examination

After the endoscopic examination, you may experience some symptoms that day, such as abdominal pain, intestinal cramps, bloating or flatulence. You may experience some mucus or fluid coming out of the anus. If the doctor has removed a polyp or small piece of colorectal tissue, you may also experience some blood loss. This can still happen up to 2 weeks after the endoscopic examination. The bleeding usually stops after a few days.

### When do you contact the hospital?

- If you lose a lot of blood;
- If the bleeding continues longer than a few days;
- If you get a fever;
- If you have abdominal pain, different from what you are used to.

In any of these cases, call the hospital where you had the procedure.

## The costs of the follow-up consultation

The assessment appointment and the endoscopic examination are not part of the population screening.

The costs of the follow-up consultation are covered by your health insurance. You may have to pay your excess. If you have questions about the reimbursement of costs, please contact your health insurer before going to the appointment.

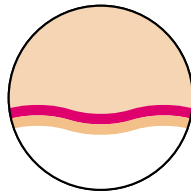
You may have an appointment for your follow-up consultation at a hospital that is not contracted by your health insurer. You can ask your health insurer which hospitals they have a contract with. You can change the appointment yourself to another hospital. In that case, please contact the Centre for Population Screening. You can find the contact details in the result letter and at: [www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl)

# What could be the result of the endoscopic examination?

Four different results are possible:

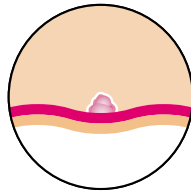
## 1 The doctor has not detected any polyps

You do not have to take part in the population screening in the next 10 years. Colorectal cancer develops very slowly. After 10 years, you will automatically be invited to participate again, unless you are aged 75 or older.



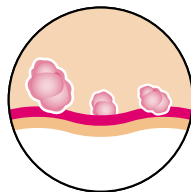
## 2 The doctor has detected 1 or more small polyps

The doctor will remove the polyp(s). They will discuss any further steps with you.



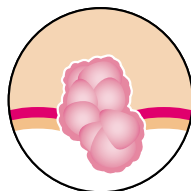
## 3 The doctor has detected 1 or more large polyps

The doctor will remove the polyp(s). If polyps have been removed, your doctor will discuss the follow-up steps. Sometimes it is necessary to check after a while to see whether polyps have grown back in your large intestine. The doctor will tell you if a new endoscopic examination is needed.

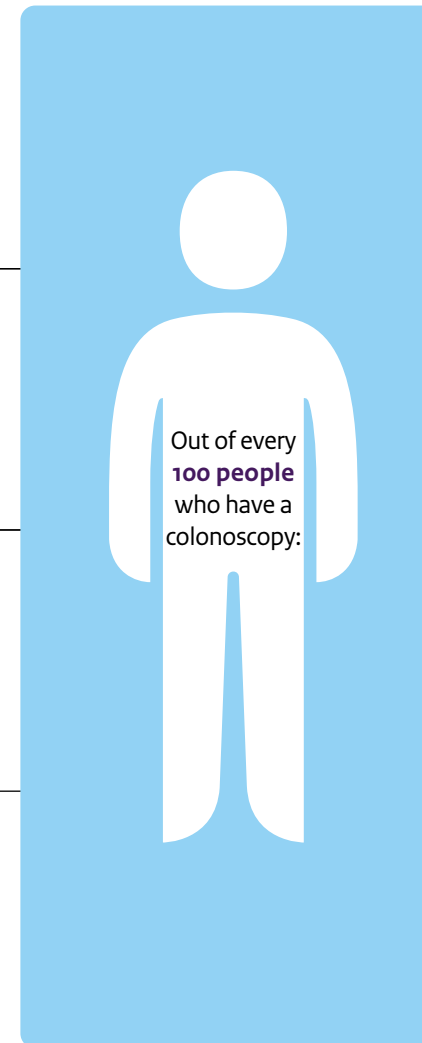


## 4 The doctor has detected colorectal cancer

Your doctor will discuss with you which treatment is best for you.



# How likely is each of these results after a colonoscopy?



## Contact your GP if you have any intestinal symptoms

There is a very small chance that you may have polyps or colorectal cancer, but this will not be detected during the endoscopic examination. If nothing has been detected, but you are experiencing 1 of the following symptoms:

- Blood or mucus in the stool;
- A change in your stools that does not go away;
- Reduced appetite for food;
- Abdominal pain or cramps;
- The feeling that you need to poo, even if you do not have to;
- Losing weight without a reason;
- Being tired all the time.

You should make an appointment with your doctor.



## Your details

Your test results can help to improve the population screening. The results from all participants combined give us a lot of information. That is why we also exchange data with research and care facilities. We follow privacy laws when we do this.

For more information about privacy, visit:  
[www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy)

### More information

For more information on colorectal cancer, the (follow-up) examination and the advantages and disadvantages, please visit:  
[www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl)

Or scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile. This will take you straight to the website.



If you have any questions, tips or complaints about the population screening, please contact the Centre for Population Screening. You can find the contact details in the letter with this leaflet, or on the website [www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl).

If you have any questions about your health, contact your GP, or ask the nurse or doctor at the hospital.

**For more information about colorectal cancer, go to:**

- [www.darmkanker.nl](http://www.darmkanker.nl)
- [www.kwf.nl/darmkanker](http://www.kwf.nl/darmkanker)
- [www.kanker.nl/darmkanker](http://www.kanker.nl/darmkanker)
- [www.mdlfonds.nl/darmkanker](http://www.mdlfonds.nl/darmkanker)
- [www.thuisarts.nl/darmkanker](http://www.thuisarts.nl/darmkanker)

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## Multiple languages / andere talen



This information is available in English at  
Bu bilgiyi Türkçe olarak şu internet sitesinde okuyabilirsiniz

يمكنكم قراءة هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية على الموقع

Te informacje są również dostępne w języku polskim na stronie  
Ви можете прочитати цю інформацію українською на веб-сайті



[www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekdarmkanker.nl/vertalingen)

The leaflet was made 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 Dutch Screening Organization.



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