



Preventive Services: Colon Cancer Screening

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends colorectal cancer screenings for people ages 50–75 years, and indicates that the fecal DNA test is one of several available strategies for screening. UnitedHealthcare continues to support preventive care including colon cancer screening. We provide coverage for screening colonoscopies, virtual colonoscopies, sigmoidoscopies and stool-based colon cancer screenings.

In addition to providing preventive coverage for existing stool-based screening tests, fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical tests (FIT), UnitedHealthcare is now adding a third stool-based colon cancer screening option called stool DNA or fecal DNA testing. The Preventive Care Services [Coverage Determination Guideline](#) (CDG) has been updated to include coverage for the fecal DNA test as a preventive service. One commercial example of a fecal DNA test is Cologuard®.

When is the new colon cancer screening effective?

UnitedHealthcare will provide preventive coverage for Cologuard for members who are age 50–75 beginning July 1, 2017. Members who are under age 50 or over age 75 do not qualify for preventive benefits with no cost-share for fecal DNA screening under our Preventive Care Services CDG. For these members cost-sharing would typically apply.

Does this apply to all employers?

The additional screening applies to fully insured plans and self-funded plans that follow our standard benefit. Certain plans, such as grandfathered plans or custom self-funded plans, may allow cost-sharing on preventive care services including fecal DNA screening.

How does it work?

- Stool-based testing including fecal DNA testing for colon cancer screening can be performed in lieu of a screening colonoscopy at the provider's discretion. Members should discuss the appropriate screening with their provider.

- If they decide on fecal DNA screening, the provider will order the kit, which would be paid as a preventive service at no cost-share. There is no paperwork for members. Members may not purchase the fecal DNA kit on their own and submit the bill.
- In some situations, a follow-up screening colonoscopy may be indicated. Whether this would be covered as preventive or under the medical plan as diagnostic will depend on the provider.

How often can a fecal DNA screening be done as a preventive service?

Fecal DNA screening is covered as a preventive service once every 3 years.

As an alternative, the FOBT and FIT have an annual screening recommendation by the USPSTF.

Where can I get more information on this preventive service?

The UnitedHealthcare Coverage Determination Guideline has specific information including the codes, ages, frequency and array of colon cancer screening options available.

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