

ColoGuard[®] and Colon Cancer Screening

The Excitement about ColoGuard[®]

The FDA recently approved ColoGuard[®], a genetic test performed on a stool sample once every 3 years, as an additional testing option for colon cancer screening. Excitement about the ease, simplicity, and availability of ColoGuard[®], has some experts claiming it as a viable alternative to colonoscopy. However, ColoGuard[®] falls far short in comparison to colonoscopy in preventing colon cancer.

First and Foremost, Get Screened

Colon cancer is a serious problem we all face. Everyone is at risk, even the healthiest of folks. More than 50,000 Americans will die of colon cancer this year. 1 in 20 people will develop colon cancer in their lifetime. Unfortunately, only about 60% of Coloradans get any form of colon cancer screening. First and foremost, get screened!

Preventing Colon Cancer is the Key

The FDA approved ColoGuard[®] based on a study showing that it detected colon cancer in 92% of subjects (that is almost as good as colonoscopy.) Sounds pretty good right?

The problem is prevention, not detection--stop cancer before it happens. The goal is to identify and removing pre-cancerous polyps before they have the chance to become cancer. ColoGuard[®] only detects 42% of advanced adenomas (serious polyps likely destined to become colon cancer.) That means that ColoGuard[®] failed to identify high risk for cancer in the majority of patients. Colonoscopy detects greater than 95% of all advanced adenomas and can remove them.

Comparing the Costs and Benefits

Medicare recently set its price for ColoGuard[®] at \$502 completed every 3 years. Whereas, the average Medicare price for colonoscopy is \$1,185, but only performed every ten years. So, over ten years, ColoGuard[®] would cost almost \$500 more than colonoscopy and yields only a 42% of detecting advanced adenomas. It just doesn't make sense to choose the more expensive test that is significantly worse at preventing cancer.

Preventing Colon Cancer in Me

What would I do? The answer is simple, *colonoscopy*. The ease and simplicity of ColoGuard[®] is appealing, but I'm not risking my life on a test that misses a serious polyp a majority of the time. And it costs more! Get serious about preventing colon cancer, get a colonoscopy!

FACTS ABOUT COLON CANCER

- 1 IN 20 PEOPLE WILL DEVELOP COLON CANCER IN THEIR LIFETIME
- >50,000 AMERICANS WILL DIE OF COLON CANCER THIS YEAR
- EVERYONE IS AT RISK, EVEN THE HEALTHIEST PEOPLE
- ONLY 60% OF PEOPLE GET COLON CANCER SCREENING
- COLON CANCER IS PREVENTABLE

Comparing ColoGuard[®] and Colonoscopy

	ColoGuard [®]	Colonoscopy
Advantages	Easy Accessible Safe	Highest polyp detection rate, therapeutic removal of polyps
Disadvantages	Poor ability to detect polyps, frequency	Invasive
Ability to detect serious pre-cancerous polyps	42%	>95%
Cost over lifetime	\$4016	\$2370
Frequency	Every 3 years	Every 10 years