

About Cancer Screening

It is important for your health to consider recommended tests for cancer screening. When VA finds cancer before you start having symptoms, you're likely to live longer. VA recommends routine screenings for four cancers: lung, cervical, breast, and colon and rectal (colorectal) cancers.



Cancer screenings help find cancer earlier. At VA, **more than half** of lung and colon cancers were diagnosed in an early stage.*



Lung Cancer Screening

VA uses a low-dose computed tomography (CT) scan to look for signs of lung cancer. This CT scan uses a low dose of X-rays to take detailed pictures of your lungs. If you're 50 to 80 years old and currently smoke cigarettes or used them in the past, talk to your primary care provider about lung cancer screening.



Breast Cancer Screening

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast, and it is the best way to find breast cancer early, before it spreads, so that it can be treated effectively.



Cervical Cancer Screening

Two tests, the Pap and HPV tests, can help prevent cervical cancer. Pap tests look for cell changes on the cervix that could become cervical cancer. HPV tests look for the human papillomavirus (HPV) that can cause cells on the cervix to become cancerous. Both tests involve a pelvic examination in which a metal or plastic device, called a speculum, is inserted in the vagina to view the cervix. A small brush is then used to collect cells from the cervix.



Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer screenings check for abnormal growths in the colon or rectum. VA offers the following tests to screen for colon cancer: fecal immunochemical test (FIT), colonoscopy, and flexible sigmoidoscopy. During a colonoscopy, polyps can be removed before they become cancer. FIT screening is done at home to check for blood in stool that you can't see. If either FIT or flexible sigmoidoscopy detects an abnormality, colonoscopy is necessary.

What are My Next Steps?

- ✓ Talk to your primary care provider to determine whether you are due for any of the screenings listed here and ask any questions you might have.
- ✓ For more information about cancer screenings at VA and how VA stands shoulder to shoulder with Veterans living with cancer, visit cancer.va.gov or email cancer@va.gov.

*Zullig LL, Sims KJ, McNeil R, et al. Cancer Incidence Among Patients of the U.S. Veterans Affairs Health Care System: 2010 Update. *Mil Med.* 2017;182(7):e1883-e1891.