



An abnormal fecal immunochemical test (FIT) result means that blood was found in the stool sample that you submitted. Abnormal FIT results are common and do not mean that you have cancer.

On average, fourteen per cent of people screened with FIT will have an abnormal result and will require additional testing. This does not mean that a cancer was found – the vast majority of people with an abnormal FIT result will not have cancer.

Some people with an abnormal FIT result may have polyps. Polyps are small growths that can develop in the colon or rectum, often with no symptoms in early stages of growth. Most polyps will never turn into cancer, and for those that do, it will take many years for this transition, which is why people between the ages of 50 to 74 years should be screened regularly.

What causes an abnormal result?

The FIT is a screening test that can only detect blood in the stool. FIT is not a diagnostic test. This means that while FIT can find one sign that may indicate cancer (blood in the stool), it cannot be used to diagnose cancer or identify the reason why there is blood in the stool.

An abnormal FIT result simply means that blood was found in the stool sample that you submitted. FIT can only tell us that you may be bleeding from somewhere in your lower digestive tract. It cannot tell us from which part or why.

There may be a number of different reasons why blood was found in your stool, including hemorrhoids (sometimes painless or internal), ulcers, anal fissures, diverticular disease, or inflammation.

If you have an abnormal FIT result, it is important that you be assessed for colonoscopy. Colonoscopy can find out where the bleeding may be coming from.

What happens after an abnormal FIT result?

After you have received your abnormal FIT result in the mail, you will be contacted by your health authority regarding further follow-up. A nurse or doctor will assess your condition and book a colonoscopy procedure if appropriate, or let you know if other monitoring or treatment is advised.

What you should know:

- An abnormal FIT result does not mean you have cancer.
- It is important to attend all follow-up appointments for tests or treatment.
- If polyps are found, most are removed during colonoscopy.

What is a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is a procedure that allows a colonoscopist to see the inside lining of the rectum and colon using a special instrument called a colonoscope.

A colonoscope is a flexible tube with a miniature camera attached to one end so that the colonoscopist can take pictures and video of your colon. During a colonoscopy, tissue samples can be collected and polyps can be removed.

Contact us:

Colon Screening Program
801–686 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Z1G1
screening@bccancer.bc.ca
www.screeningbc.ca/colon