

# Colon Screening Program Fact Sheet

## Program Overview

The BC Cancer Colon Screening Program is an organized population-based program aimed at reducing colon cancer incidence and mortality in BC.

## Screening Eligibility

### Who should receive colon screening?

- In general, anyone between the ages of 50 to 74 with no symptoms should get screened for colon cancer.

### Who should not receive colon screening?

- Screening is only recommended for people who are not experiencing symptoms that may indicate colon cancer. Symptoms can include blood in the stool, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits and unexplained weight loss. If a patient is experiencing symptoms, refer for diagnostic testing to determine the cause of the symptom(s).
- Individuals should not receive colon screening if they are up-to-date with screening, including:
  - FIT in the preceding two years or colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy in the preceding 10 years for average risk individuals.
  - Colonoscopy in the preceding five years for patients at higher than average risk.
- Individuals with a personal history of colon cancer, ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease have individual needs that cannot be met with a population approach to screening. These patients should continue to obtain care through their specialist or primary care provider.
- In general, people who have been regularly screened with FIT or have undergone colonoscopies do not appear to benefit from screening beyond age 75.

## The Screening Tests

### Average Risk - Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

FIT is recommended every 2 years for average risk colon screening by the Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care to decrease colon cancer mortality and incidence. In BC, FIT is expected to yield over 80% sensitivity and 90% specificity for detecting colon cancer. There are also no dietary or medication restrictions for FIT, which assists uptake and test completion.

**Screening interval:** FIT every 2 years for average-risk individuals age 50 to 74.

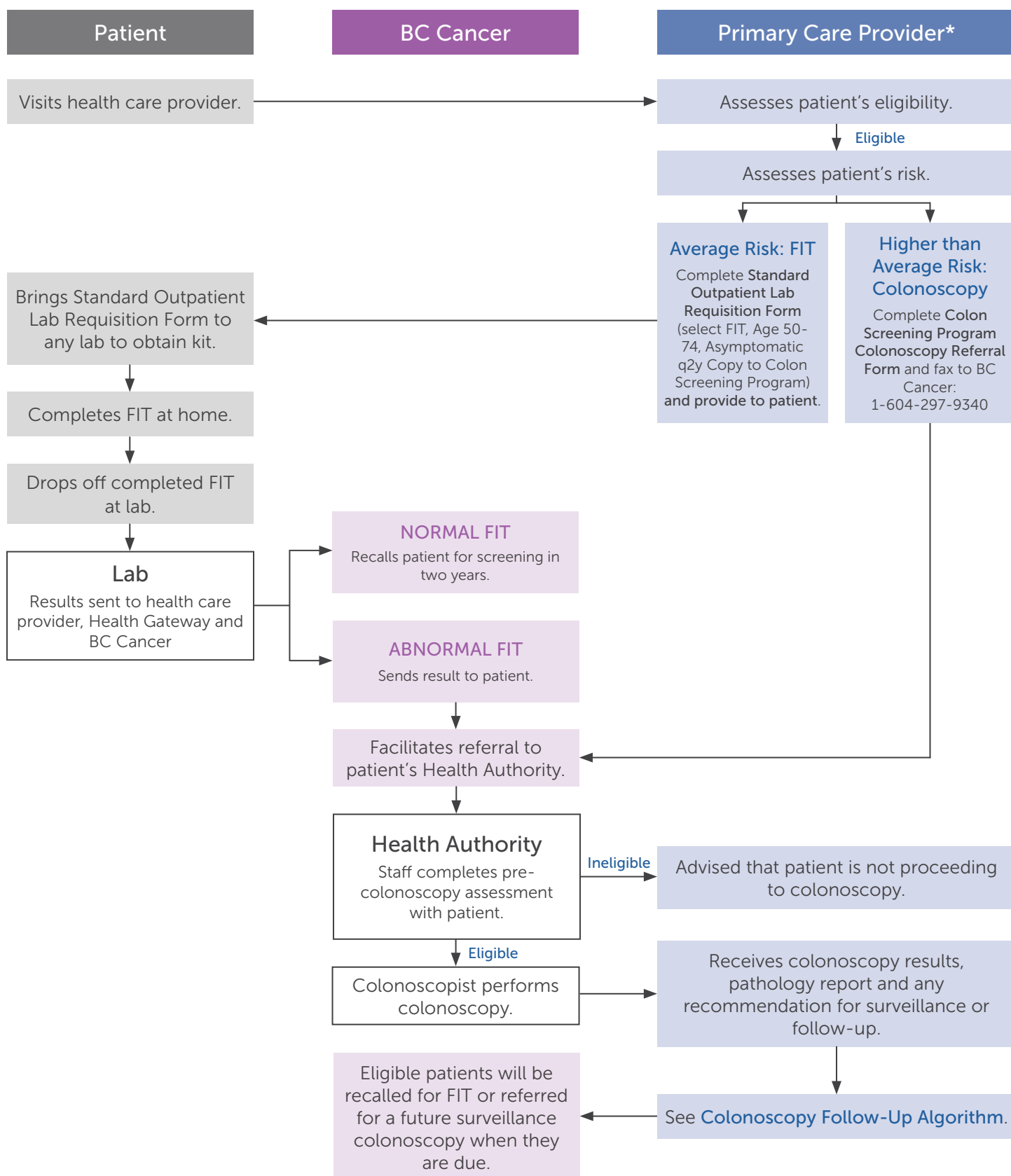
### Higher Than Average Risk - Colonoscopy

Colonoscopy is recommended for individuals up to age 74 (inclusive) at higher than average risk for developing colon cancer, defined as having one of the following:

- One first degree relative (parent, full sibling, child) diagnosed with colon cancer under the age of 60\*;
- Two or more first degree relatives with colon cancer diagnosed at any age\*;
- A personal history of precancerous lesions, including adenomas, sessile serrated lesion(s), traditional serrated adenomas, or hyperplastic polyps > 10 mm.

\*For those with a family history of colon cancer, the first screening colonoscopy should be done at age 40 or 10 years younger than the age of diagnosis of the youngest affected first degree relative — whichever is earliest.

# Patient Pathway



\*Includes both general practitioners and nurse practitioners