



Cancer Screening Guidelines

For average-risk adults

Why should I get screened?

Cancer screening can find cancers earlier, when treatment is more likely to be successful. In some cases, screening can even prevent cancer before it develops.

What's my risk?

No one can predict who will get cancer and who will not. Some cancers run in families. Cancer can also be caused by the conditions where we live and work, and by our lifestyle. Racism and other forms of oppression impact all of these factors, including our ability to access health care. Those of us with no personal or family history of cancer and no factors that increase risk are at an average risk for cancer.

Talk to your provider about screening.
It's the best thing we can do for ourselves and our loved ones.



Age

Screening

All ages	Skin Cancer Talk to your medical provider about any changes to your skin or if you have symptoms such as changes in the size, shape, or color of skin growths, or if you have irregular moles.
21-29	Cervical Cancer If you have a vagina, a Pap test is recommended every 3 years beginning at age 21.
30-39	Cervical Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pap test every 3 years or• HPV test every 5 years or• Both a Pap and HPV test every 5 years
40-49	Breast Cancer If you have breast/chest tissue, mammograms are recommended every 2 years beginning at age 40. Cervical Cancer Continue Pap test and/or HPV testing. Colorectal Cancer Colorectal cancer screening is recommended beginning at age 45. Options include a colonoscopy or an at-home stool-based test. Frequency depends on the type of screening test you choose.
50+	Lung Cancer If you have a history of smoking and are age 50-80, talk to your medical provider about your risk and if getting a low-dose CT scan every year is right for you. Prostate Cancer From age 55 to 69, if you have a penis, talk to your medical provider about your risk and discuss if a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test is right for you. Breast Cancer Continue mammograms every 2 years, until age 74. Cervical Cancer Continue Pap test and/or HPV testing, until age 65. Colorectal Cancer Continue screening for colorectal cancer, until age 75. After age 75, discuss with your medical provider whether to continue screening.



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Questions you can ask your medical provider



- What cancer screenings do you recommend for me?
- Where can I go to get screened?
- How do I schedule my screenings?
- How can I get help paying for screenings if they are not covered by my health insurance?
- Are there special cancer screening recommendations for people who have had gender-affirming surgery?
- Is the screening site and equipment accessible for persons with disabilities?
- Are there at-home options for any of the suggested screenings?

Talk to your medical provider to understand what cancer screenings are right for you.

If you need help getting care, check out our [list of resources](#).



Questions you can ask your health insurance provider

- Do I need to pay for cancer screenings?
- What will I need to pay if I have follow-up visits after the screening?
- Are there any doctors, hospitals, or screening facilities I should use for my screening tests?
- How do I tell if a doctor, hospital, or screening facility is covered by my insurance?
 - If a doctor, hospital, or testing facility isn't covered by my insurance, what will my expected costs be?
- Do I need to get insurance approval for any screenings?



Learn more about our Cancer Programs

Comprehensive Cancer Control Program



www.mass.gov/MCCCP

Breast & Cervical Cancer Program



www.mass.gov/MBCCP

Colorectal Cancer Control Program



www.mass.gov/MCRCCP

Note: Screening guidelines are based on the [United States Preventive Services Task Force \(USPSTF\) recommendations](#).