



## How to Prepare for Your Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)

### If you and your doctor decide that an FOBT is right for you...

...your doctor's office will give you a kit with instructions. The kit will explain how to collect a stool sample at home and what to do with the sample for testing.

Review the instructions with your doctor in advance to be sure you get answers to any questions you might have about the test. The FOBT is one of several screening tests recommended by the American Cancer Society.<sup>1</sup>



♥ **Before the test.** There is very little preparation.

- Your doctor may suggest that you avoid certain foods or drugs such as NSAIDs (like ibuprofen or aspirin), excess vitamin C, or red meat because they can create false test results<sup>1</sup>

♥ **Collecting samples.** When it's time to start the collection, make sure that you have the kit supplies ready and in one place.

- Supplies will include a test kit, test cards, either a brush or wooden applicator stick (used to collect the sample and apply it to the test card), and a mailing envelope

♥ **After collection.** Deliver your sample for testing as instructed by your doctor.

- This must be done within 2 weeks of taking the sample<sup>1</sup>

- If the FOBT result finds blood in your stool sample, a colonoscopy may be needed to find the source of the blood<sup>1</sup>
- If you need a colonoscopy after a positive FOBT, it may be considered a diagnostic service—which might affect your out-of-pocket costs

### **FOBT is one of the easier screening tests,**

however, it has a few limitations compared with other tests<sup>1</sup>:

- It is less likely to detect polyps than a colonoscopy
- It should be done every year
- A positive test result does not necessarily mean you have colon cancer—there may be other reasons for blood in the stool

**These tips may be used as a guide, but always follow the instructions provided by your doctor.**

---

To learn more about colorectal cancer and screening, visit

[www.LoveYourColon.org](http://www.LoveYourColon.org)

---

**Reference: 1.** Colorectal cancer screening tests. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/screening-tests-used.html>. Accessed May 19, 2017.