



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# Colorectal cancer *screening* - follow-up exam

Caribbean Netherlands - Bonaire



# You participated in the colorectal cancer screening program

We found blood in your stool. There are several reasons why you might have blood in your stool. It could be because of polyps or colorectal cancer. There may also be other reasons.

## Follow-up diagnostic testing is needed

Referral for follow-up diagnostic testing does not mean you have polyps or colorectal cancer. The purpose of follow-up testing is to find the reason for the blood in your stool.

**The follow-up diagnostic testing consists of 2 parts:**

### 1. Intake

An intake interview at Fundashon Mariadal with an anesthesia nurse and an endoscopy nurse. The nurse discusses the possibility of doing a colonoscopy with you.

### 2. Examination

If it is possible to do a colonoscopy, a second appointment will be scheduled with you after the intake interview. At this appointment, the inside of your colon will be examined. A visual examination of the colon is called a colonoscopy.

This leaflet tells you more about the follow-up diagnostic testing.

**Do you still have questions after reading the leaflet?**

Contact your family doctor or the screening organization.

# Follow-up testing in 5 steps

## 1. Results letter

U heeft bij deze folder een brief ontvangen met de uitslag van het bevolkingsonderzoek.



## 2. Contact with your family doctor

Your family doctor will contact you and refer you to the hospital. Your family doctor will send the following information to the endoscopy department:

- an overview of your medications
- your allergies
- your medical history

## 3. Intake interview at the hospital

At the hospital, you will have an intake interview with an anesthesia nurse and an endoscopy nurse.

You will discuss:

- your health
- if you are taking any medication
- if anyone else in your family has had colorectal cancer
- what the colonoscopy involves
- if a colonoscopy is possible in your case
- if and when you will have an appointment for a colonoscopy.

You can think about how to answer these questions before you go to the intake.



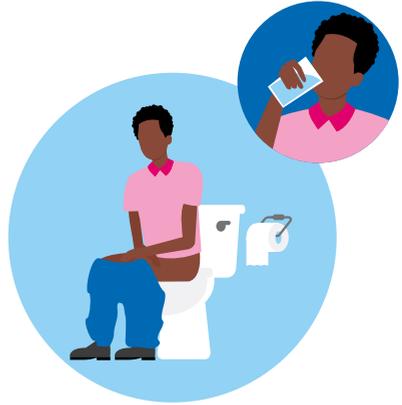
### Remember to bring along:

- Your Sedula

*The intake interview will take about half an hour.*

## 4. Preparing at home

It is important that your colon is clean and empty during the colonoscopy. That helps the doctor to examine your colon properly. You will drink a laxative at home before you go to the hospital. You will need to go to the toilet often, and may have stomach cramps.



*How to prepare at home will be explained more during the intake. You will also get a prescription, so you can pick up the laxative from a pharmacy.*

Want to know what to expect? Watch this video:  
[www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/colorectal-cancer-screening](http://www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/colorectal-cancer-screening).

## 5. Colonoscopy at the hospital

The aim of the colonoscopy is to examine the inside of your colon. The endoscopist will do this using an endoscope. This is a flexible tube that is about as thick as a finger. The endoscopist slides the endoscope through the anus and into your colon. In the tip of the endoscope, there is a small camera with a light. The endoscopist can look through the camera to see if there are any polyps in your colon.

*The colonoscopy takes about 30 to 45 minutes.*



### **Anesthesia**

*Many people feel uncomfortable when the doctor inserts the endoscope. The endoscope can sometimes hurt a bit as it moves deeper into the colon, especially when going around a bend in your colon. That is why you will be under anesthesia during the exam. This will be explained during the intake.*

## Complications during a colonoscopy

Every colonoscopy is done very carefully, but complications can happen:

- If a polyp is removed, the spot might bleed. If it does, the endoscopist is often able to stop the bleeding during the colonoscopy.
- There is a very small chance of a small hole or tear in the colon. This almost never happens.
- If there is a hole or tear in the colon, stool can get into the abdominal cavity. This can lead to an infection called peritonitis.

For every 10,000 colonoscopies performed in the European Netherlands, serious problems happen in an average of 3 cases. There is an extremely small chance that a colonoscopy could lead to death.

## After the colonoscopy

After the colonoscopy, you will have time to recover from the examination and the anesthesia. If everything goes well, once you are fully awake, you will be informed of the findings. Then you can have something to eat and go home. In principle, you can eat and drink whatever you like after the colonoscopy.

## Symptoms after the colonoscopy

After the colonoscopy, you may feel some discomfort for the rest of that day. These symptoms can include stomach pain, cramps, bloating or gas. A little mucus or liquid may leak from your anus. If the endoscopist removed a polyp or took a sample from your colon, you may also see a bit of blood. If that happens, it may continue for up to 2 weeks after the colonoscopy. The bleeding usually stops after a few days.

### When should you contact the hospital?

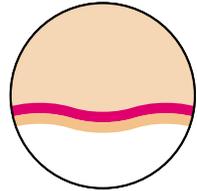
Are you bleeding a lot? Or have you been bleeding for longer than a few days? Do you have a fever? Or are the cramps and stomach pain growing worse? If so, you should call the hospital where you had the colonoscopy. If you get these symptoms outside of opening hours, go to the Emergency Room.

# What are the possible results of the colonoscopy?

Four different results are possible:

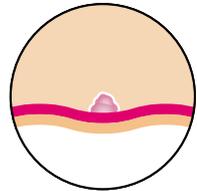
## 1. The doctor does not find any polyps

After a colonoscopy, you do not need to participate in the population screening program for the next 10 years. This is because colorectal cancer develops very slowly. We will send you a new invitation in 10 years, unless you are over 75 years old at that time.



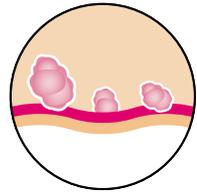
## 2. The endoscopist finds one or more small polyps

The endoscopist removes any polyps, or takes a small tissue sample from the inside of your colon. The endoscopist will talk to you about the next steps.



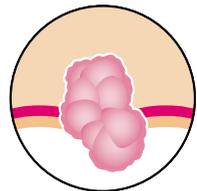
## 3. The endoscopist finds one or more large polyps

The endoscopist will remove the large polyps. It is important to check back later to see if polyps are growing in your colon again. The endoscopist will talk to you about the next steps.



## 4. The endoscopist finds colorectal cancer

The endoscopist will talk to you about which treatment is best in your case.





## Go to your family doctor if you have colon problems

Even if you do have follow-up testing, there is a very small chance that polyps or colorectal cancer are not discovered during the colonoscopy. If the endoscopist did not find anything relevant, but you do get 1 or more of these symptoms, make an appointment with your family doctor.

- blood or mucus in your stool
- a change in your stool that does not go away
- less interest in food (lower appetite)
- stomach pain or cramps
- feeling like you need to poop, even if nothing comes out
- unplanned weight loss
- tired all the time

## Your data

Your test results can help to improve population screening. Looking at the results from all the participants together is very informative. That is why we also exchange data with research and care facilities. We follow privacy laws when we do this. For more information about privacy, go to [www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/privacy](http://www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/privacy).

## More information

For more information about the population screening for colorectal cancer in the Caribbean Netherlands visit [www.screening-cn.com](http://www.screening-cn.com) and our Facebook page ScreeningCN.



Call +599 715 9200 or WhatsApp +599 781 0476 for more information about Bevolkingsonderzoek Caribisch Nederland.

RIVM is conducting the colorectal cancer screening program in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Do you have any questions, tips, complaints or compliments about the screening program? Please contact us via [screeningCN@rivm.nl](mailto:screeningCN@rivm.nl).

For more information about the complaints procedure, visit [www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/complaints](http://www.bonaire.screening-cn.com/en/complaints).

## Information in other languages

This information is also available in Dutch/Spanish/Papiamentu:

Deze informatie is ook beschikbaar in het Nederlands:

Bo por lesa e informashon aki na papiamentu:

Esta informacion esta disponible en Espanol:



The colorectal cancer screening in the Caribbean Netherlands is carried out by:



This is a publication by:

**National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment, RIVM**

P.O. Box 1 | 3720 BA Bilthoven

The Netherlands

[www.rivm.nl/en](http://www.rivm.nl/en)

April 2025

**Committed to** *health and sustainability*