

A simple home test can help save your life

When Colorado member Don Herman turned 50, he got an unusual birthday present that Kaiser Permanente sends to many members. “It was a stool test to screen for colorectal cancer,” he says. He had no symptoms, but Herman took the stool test at home and sent it to the lab. About 10 days later, he received a call from Kaiser Permanente asking him to come in for more tests.

Herman soon learned he had [colon cancer](#). He underwent treatment and surgery at Kaiser Permanente and is now cancer-free. “If I hadn’t gotten that test in the mail,” he says, “I don’t know if I’d be here today.” [Watch Herman’s video at our “Care Stories” website.](#)

“Mr. Herman’s story is a common one,” says his physician, John Riopelle, DO. “Colorectal cancer may not cause symptoms until after it has begun to spread. When we find colon cancer early with screening tests, we can treat it more easily.” Colon cancer screening is recommended for everyone 50 and older who has a normal risk for colon cancer. People with a higher risk, such as African-Americans and people with a family history of colon cancer, may need to be screened sooner. Talk to your doctor about when you should be tested.

Here are 5 things you can do to help prevent colon and other types of cancer:

1. Watch your weight. Talk with your doctor about body mass index and review [information about weight management](#). Also, check out the online weight loss program [HealthMedia® Balance®](#), which is designed to motivate and educate.
2. Eat healthy. Fiber-rich foods, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, poultry, and fish are great choices. [Find out which foods are high in fiber](#), because we recommend that men get 38 grams of fiber per day and women get 25 grams.
3. Limit alcohol to fewer than 2 drinks a day.
4. [Get active](#). How about taking an [exercise class](#) in your area? (Some classes require a fee.)
5. Quit smoking. Look into all the ways you can [kick the habit for good](#).

Personalized care, when you need it

Colon cancer screening and treatment are among the ways we help keep you healthy. Kaiser Permanente can help you take charge of your wellness with personalized care from primary care physicians to meet your unique needs. And, many of our locations provide same-day, after-hours, and weekend services, so you can get the care you need, when you need it.