

Early detection of colon cancer

for 50 to 75-year-old men by flexible sigmoidoscopy

The numbers below are averages for 50 to 75-year-old men who have or have not had a flexible sigmoidoscopy at least once within 10 to 17 years.

	1,000 men who did not participate in screening	1,000 men who participated in screening
Benefits		
How many men died in total?	No difference: about 282 in both groups.	
How many men died of colon cancer?	10	7
How many men developed advanced colon cancer?	28	21
Harms		
During the examination, how many men experienced moderate to severe pain?	-	260
How many men experienced severe complications (e.g., colon injuries and bleeding, also during the removal of precancerous lesions)?	-	fewer than 1

Short summary: Flexible sigmoidoscopy reduced the number of men who died from colon cancer by 3 out of every 1,000 men. Seven fewer men out of 1,000 developed advanced colorectal cancer. Some experienced moderate to severe pain and, in rare cases, complications from the procedure.

Sources: Lin. *Jama* 2021;325(19):1978-1998. Rutter. *Gut* 2021;70(5):845-852.

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<https://www.hardingcenter.de/en/fact-boxes>