

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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If you have symptoms that suggest you may have colon cancer, your doctor will take your medical history, perform a physical examination, and may order diagnostic tests.

Colonoscopy and Biopsy for Colon Cancer Diagnosis

If we suspect that you have colon cancer based on those results, one of our specialists will do a [colonoscopy](#) and take a biopsy. In this test, the doctor removes a small piece of tissue with a special instrument. One of our expert pathologists (doctors who specialize in diagnosing disease) then examines the tissue sample under a microscope.

Your care team may recommend CT and MRI scans to determine the stage of the cancer and to see if it has spread to other organs.

Genetic Testing

Colon cancer can involve a number of genetic mutations that cause normal cells to become cancerous. These changes in the genes are called somatic mutations. They are found only in the cancer cells. They are not found in your normal cells, so they can't be passed down to your children.

For some advanced cancers, pathologists at Memorial Sloan Kettering will do molecular testing on a tumor to find somatic mutations. These mutations can predict how a tumor might react to treatments. Knowing as much as possible about a tumor's genetic makeup can help your care team choose the treatments that are most likely to help you.

If the cancer has spread outside the colon, your doctor will test biopsy samples for mutations in genes called *EGFR*, *KRAS*, and *BRAF*. These are common in colon cancer. We will also test for mutations in less common genes.

Request an Appointment

Call [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225)

Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

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