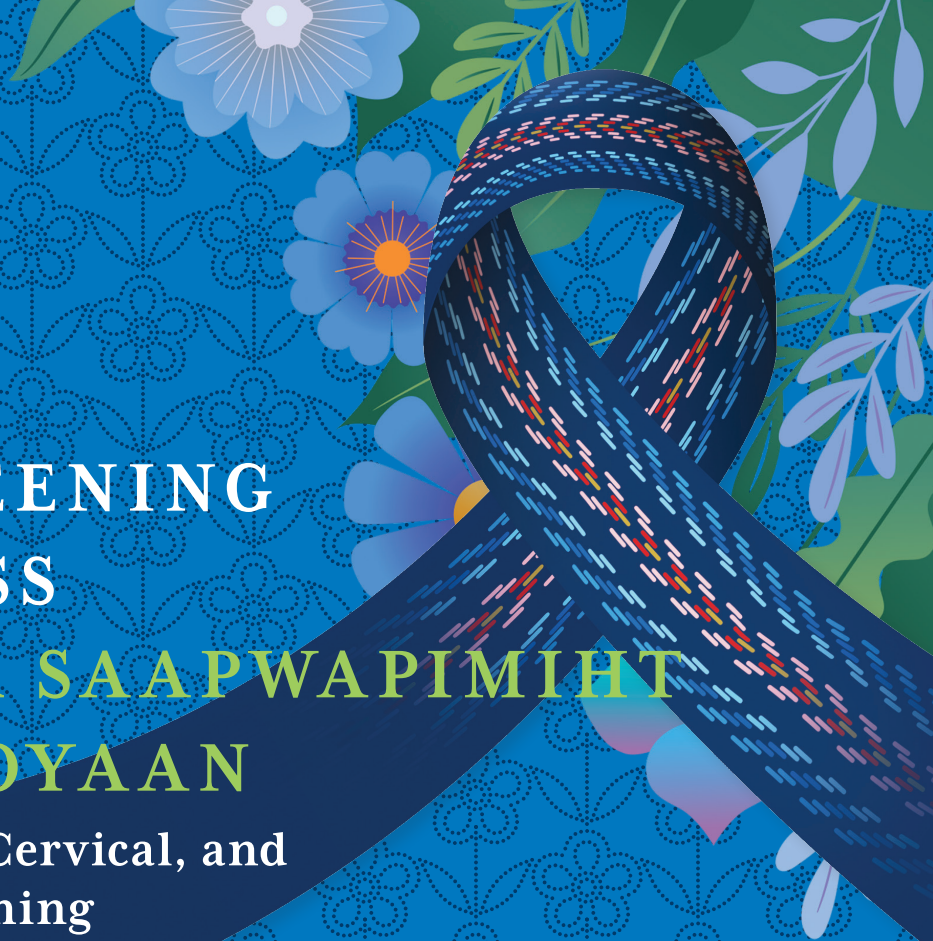




Otipemisiwak
Métis Government

CANCER SCREENING FOR WELLNESS LI KAANSAYR SAAPWAPIMIHT OOCHI MIYOOYAAN

Métis Guide for Breast, Cervical, and
Colorectal Cancer Screening



Acknowledgements

We thank the many Métis Albertans who participated in the cancer screening survey conducted between September and December 2022. The results from this survey allowed us to gain an understanding of Métis Albertans' cancer screening rates, behaviours, and the barriers and facilitators they experience to cancer screening programs in Alberta. We thank the University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services Screening Programs for supporting the development of the survey and data analysis. This survey was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

We also thank all Métis Albertans who participated in the cancer screening gatherings and telephone interviews held in January and February 2024. What we heard during these gatherings and interviews helped us gain a deeper understanding of Métis peoples' cancer screening experiences by hearing directly about the barriers that prevent people from accessing screening. Their insights into how Métis

people experience cancer screening in Alberta laid the foundation for this guide. We thank them for sharing their insights, stories, and experiences to help make cancer screening more accessible to all eligible Métis Albertans.

This resource was made possible through funding from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

Thanks to our partners at Alberta Health Services Screening Programs and the University of Calgary for helping to finalize this resource.

If you have questions about the information in this guide, please contact health@metis.org.

This guide is available on our website at albertamemis.com/cancer-screening-guide.





*“[If we talk about cancer screening], maybe more people
will go through with it and then [we can] find and
detect it early and have a better outcome.”*

– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings



A Message from the President

Cancer affects the Métis community in many ways. As the President of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, I am pleased to present the *Cancer Screening for Wellness (Li Kaansayr Saapwapimiht Oochi Miyooayaan): A Métis Guide for Breast, Cervical, and Colorectal Cancer Screening*.

This guide is grounded in the voices and experiences of Métis Albertans and is a stepping stone in our community's wellness journey. By having accurate information about cancer screening and accessing resources that reduce barriers to screening, we can begin to detect cancer at an earlier stage and reduce the burden this disease has on us as individuals, families, and communities.

This work would not be possible without support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and without the participation of the many Métis Albertans who shared their cancer screening experiences.

We also thank all our partners for their support and contribution to the development of this guide.

I wish you happiness, health, and wellness.

Sincerely,
Andrea Sandmaier,
President of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government



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Introduction



Welcome to our *Cancer Screening for Wellness (Li Kaansayr Saapwapimiht Oochi Miyooayaan): A Métis Guide for Breast, Cervical, and Colorectal Cancer Screening*. **Cancer screening programs are available for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer in Alberta.** Hence, this guide will focus on these three types of cancers. This guide was developed by the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta (MNA) Health Department.

The MNA's Health Department provides self-directed health and wellness opportunities to advance the priorities of Métis Albertans and their communities. In April 2023, the MNA Health Department released the **Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy**, which lists priorities, actions and recommendations to improve the cancer journey experiences of Métis Albertans.



Priorities in the strategy include collecting Métis-specific cancer screening data to inform meaningful interventions for cancer prevention and equitable care.¹

Métis Albertans who participated in our cancer screening research, including a cancer screening survey in 2022 and cancer screening gatherings and telephone interviews in early 2024, laid the foundation for this guide. Each section of the guide includes quotes from Métis Albertans who shared their stories, insights, and experiences during the cancer screening gatherings and interviews. The following themes summarize the gaps and needs shared during the gatherings that hinder access to cancer screening programs for Métis Albertans:

- ∞ There is inadequate communication from healthcare professionals.
- ∞ There is a broken healthcare system and barriers to accessing care.

- ∞ There is a need for support and safety.
- ∞ The importance of preventative health behaviours and attitudes.

Additionally, in the cancer screening survey conducted in 2022, participants rated “access to reliable information on cancer screening” and “providing accurate information about cancer screening” as the two most important factors in accessing cancer screening in Alberta.² In response to this finding, this guide provides the following:

- ∞ Information about cancer and cancer prevention.
- ∞ The cancer screening guidelines and procedures, including questions to ask during your appointment.
- ∞ Resources available to help access screening.
- ∞ Resources available if you receive a cancer diagnosis.

By providing clear, accessible, and culturally appropriate information on cancer screening, we aim to bridge the above gaps by communicating the cancer screening guidelines and procedures, sharing resources available to help the community access screening programs, and providing information on cancer prevention to reduce the impact cancer has on our community.

We hope this resource will help Métis Albertans access cancer screening programs in Alberta to detect cancer at the earliest stage possible when it is most treatable.



What is cancer?

The human body is made up of trillions of cells. Cancer is when cells in the body grow out of control. These abnormal cells grow due to a gene mutation that can be inherited from your parents or grandparents or develop over time as you age.³

Cancer is not caused by one thing. Many different factors can contribute to your risk of cancer, such as family history, lifestyle factors, age, and environmental exposure. Check out the **Canadian Cancer Society** website to learn more about reducing your cancer risk.

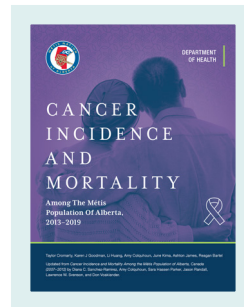
Métis People and cancer

Overall, Métis Albertans have similar rates of cancer compared to non-Métis Albertans.⁴ However, Métis people in Alberta have slightly higher rates of breast and cervical cancer compared to non-Métis Albertans,⁴ making it critical to promote the

early detection of these cancers through screening. Colorectal cancer rates are slightly lower in Métis Albertans compared to non-Métis Albertans. Despite this, colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer among all people in Alberta.⁵

Studies have shown that cancer is the leading cause of death among Métis women and the second-leading cause of death among Métis men.⁶ Cancer screening programs provide an opportunity for the early detection of cancer and pre-cancerous lesions, contributing to better health outcomes and survival rates. Following the cancer screening guidelines as part of your regular healthcare routine is vital for maintaining and monitoring your health.

To learn more about **Cancer Incidence and Mortality** read our report.



“So that early diagnosis, so you have a better chance, that makes sense to me.” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

The importance of cancer screening

Cancer screening helps to detect cancer at an early stage when it is most treatable.

You may not have any signs or symptoms if cancer is in your body, making it essential to access cancer screening to detect abnormal cells that would not be detected otherwise. Screening should be part of your regular healthcare routine to maintain good health and monitor changes in your body.

Cancer screening is one of the most important things you can do to prevent cancer and detect it when it is most treatable.

“...I feel like being preventative with these kinds of things is a lot better than finding out a cancer diagnosis too late, if it has spread. And yeah, I think it’s an important issue to make sure people are aware of what they’re eligible for.”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings



Symptoms of cancer

Regular cancer screening can help detect cancer and pre-cancerous lesions before symptoms occur. However, if you suspect you are experiencing symptoms of cancer, it is vital to see a healthcare provider right away.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BREAST, CERVICAL, AND COLORECTAL CANCER SYMPTOMS



Breast Cancer Symptoms



Cervical Cancer Symptoms



Colorectal Cancer Symptoms





Breast Cancer Prevention and Screening



Breast Cancer Prevention

Cancer is not caused by one thing. Many different factors can contribute to your risk of cancer, such as family history, lifestyle factors, age, and environmental exposure. Some of these factors we can't control, like our family history or age. The good news is that understanding risk factors can help us make informed choices to support our overall health, like staying active, eating nourishing foods, and avoiding harmful substances. It's not about blame or fear — it's about empowering ourselves to live our best life possible.

“I want the holistic, traditional food, medicines... things like that. And detoxing food. Our people were healthy... we survived and overcame a lot of things.”
– Participant in the MNA's 2024 Cancer Screening Gathering

LEARN MORE

For more information on the risk factors for breast cancer go to:
cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/breast/risks



There are things you can do to limit your risk of developing breast cancer:



Avoid commercial tobacco products.



Maintain a healthy body weight.



Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables.



Limit alcohol use.



Stay active. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity every day.



Women who have children at a younger age have a lower risk of breast cancer. This may already be true for you or something you want to consider as you plan your family.



Taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for more than five years may increase your risk of breast cancer. Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks of HRT.



Oral contraceptives (“the pill”) that contain both estrogen and progesterone may increase your risk for breast cancer. Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of using oral contraceptives.

Breast Cancer Screening

Mammogram

WHAT IS A MAMMOGRAM?⁷

A mammogram is a breast X-ray that can detect small, abnormal cells that you or a healthcare provider cannot feel.

A mammogram will be completed at a medical imaging clinic.

While standing, each breast is placed on a flat x-ray machine, one at a time. A plate presses down on the breast for a few seconds to spread the breast tissue. This ensures that small abnormalities (breast lumps) can be seen on the x-ray.

The procedure takes approximately 10 minutes. A mammogram may be uncomfortable or slightly painful but is tolerable. A female technician will complete the mammogram.

WHO SHOULD GET A MAMMOGRAM?⁷

Mammograms are recommended for **females aged 45 to 74 and should be done every two years.**

Note: *If you have a family history of cancer or can feel any changes in your breast, your healthcare provider may recommend breast cancer screening at an earlier age. It is important to discuss your personal and family history of cancer with a healthcare provider to determine what is right for you.*

HOW TO MAKE A MAMMOGRAM APPOINTMENT:⁷

It is important to discuss cancer screening with your healthcare provider. If you are 45 to 74 or eligible for an earlier mammogram, you will receive a referral (requisition) from your healthcare provider. However, you do not need a referral to book a mammogram if you are between the ages of 45 and 74. Visit screeningforlife.ca/where-to-get-screened to find where breast cancer screening is available across Alberta.

If breast cancer screening is unavailable at a clinic near you, Alberta Health Services offers a mobile mammogram service that visits 120 rural communities across Alberta. For more information, see the section titled “What support is available for traveling to healthcare appointments” on page 39.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR MAMMOGRAM APPOINTMENT:⁷

On the day of your appointment:

Wear a separate top and bottom. Clothing from the waist up will need to be removed.

Avoid wearing perfume, antiperspirants, deodorants, and body powder because these can affect the mammogram's results.

Questions to ask at your appointment:

- ∞ Are there any side effects from a mammogram?
- ∞ How long will the X-ray take?
- ∞ When can I expect to receive the results?
- ∞ Who will explain the results?
- ∞ What happens if my results are abnormal?

If you are unsure about the procedure or have never had it done before, ask questions. **You have the right to know what will happen throughout your appointment.**

WAITING FOR YOUR RESULTS:⁸

You may receive your results in a few different ways:

- ∞ Your healthcare provider may contact you.
- ∞ A letter from the Alberta Breast Cancer Screening Program.
- ∞ By contacting your healthcare provider directly.

Contact your healthcare provider if you haven't received your results within a few weeks.

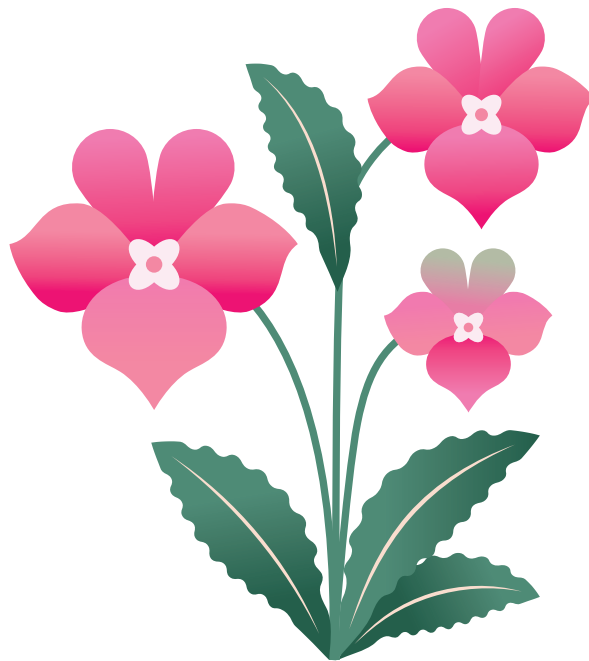
LEARN MORE

For more information about breast cancer screening go to:
screeningforlife.ca/breast
or call the Screening Programs'
Client Line at **1-866-727-3926**



*"A mammogram saved my life!"
– Participant in the MNA's 2024
Cancer Screening Gatherings*

*"Like I say, I hate to have it done.
My doctor always says 'Well, you
know, it looks like it's time for you
to go have a mammogram.' And
I'm like, 'Well, I've already received
my card in the mail, so I've already
made my appointment because
I'm making that quite important to
me to make sure it's done.'"
– Participant in MNA's 2024 Cancer
Screening Gatherings*



Get Screened.

Cancer screening saves lives.

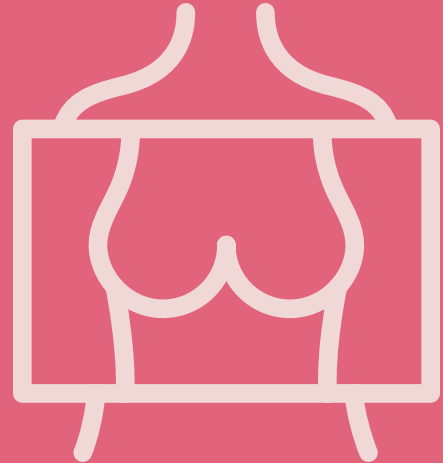
Breast Cancer Screening

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is a breast x-ray that detects small, abnormal cells.

When should I have a mammogram?

You should have a mammogram every two years from age 45 to 74.





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Cervical Cancer Prevention and Screening



Cervical Cancer Prevention

Cancer is not caused by one thing. Many different factors can contribute to your risk of cancer, such as family history, lifestyle factors, age, and environmental exposure. Some of these factors we can't control, like our family history or age.

The good news is that understanding risk factors can help us make informed choices to support our overall health, like staying active, eating nourishing foods, and avoiding harmful substances. It's not about blame or fear – it's about empowering ourselves to live our best life possible.

“Yeah, but the key is to have the vaccine before you're sexually active. It's good still to get it after, but the population that had it before 14 (years old) or whatever, it's almost zero cervical cancer.”
– Participant in the MNA's 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

LEARN MORE

For more information on the risk factors for cervical cancer go to:
cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/cervical/risks



There are things you can do to limit your risk of developing cervical cancer:



Get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. Talk to your healthcare provider to determine what is best for you.



Practice safe sex.



Avoid commercial tobacco products.



Limit your number of sexual partners.



Having sex at an early age increases your risk of cervical cancer. Practicing safe sex and getting the HPV vaccine can reduce your risk.



Taking oral contraceptives (“the pill”) over a long period may increase your risk of cervical cancer. Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of using oral contraceptives.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Pap Smear Test

WHAT IS A PAP TEST?⁹

A Pap smear test is a swab of the cervix to check for abnormal cells. Abnormal cells can change over time; you may not experience pain or symptoms if abnormal cells develop.

A Pap smear test can be completed at your healthcare provider's office or many health clinics across Alberta.

Before the procedure, you will be asked to undress from the waist down and given a gown. When it is time to complete the Pap test, you will lie on your back with your feet on stirrups. The healthcare provider will insert a speculum into your vagina so

the cervix can be seen. A swab of the cervix is then taken and sent to the lab.

The procedure will only take a few minutes. A Pap smear test may be uncomfortable but should not be painful.

WHO SHOULD GET A PAP TEST?⁹

Pap smear tests are recommended for **females aged 25 to 69 and should be done every three years.**

Note: *If you have a personal or family history of cervical cancer, your healthcare provider may recommend cervical cancer screening at an earlier age. It is important to discuss your personal and family history of cancer with a healthcare provider to determine what is right for you.*

HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A PAP TEST:⁹

You can make an appointment for a Pap smear test with your healthcare provider or at a health clinic that offers this service. Find out where cervical cancer screening is available across Alberta at screeningforlife.ca/where-to-get-screened. You can request to have an appointment with a female provider if this is important to you.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR PAP SMEAR TEST:⁹

Before your appointment

It is recommended to avoid the following before your appointment:

- ∞ Try to make your appointment for a day when you won't have your period.
- ∞ Don't douche or use contraceptive creams or jellies in the 24 hours before the test.
- ∞ Don't have sexual intercourse in the 24 hours before the test.
- ∞ Avoid using personal lubricants in the 48 hours before the test.

On the day of your appointment

Wear a separate top and bottom. Clothing from the waist down will need to be removed.

A Pap test is invasive but not painful. It is important to communicate any concerns you have with your healthcare provider.

Questions to ask at your appointment:

- ∞ Are there any side effects from a Pap smear test?
- ∞ How long will the test take?
- ∞ When can I expect to receive the results?
- ∞ Who will explain the results?
- ∞ What happens if my results are abnormal?

If you are unsure about the procedure or have never had it done before, ask questions. **You have the right to know what will happen throughout your appointment.**

WAITING FOR YOUR RESULTS:¹⁰

You may get your results in a few different ways:

- ∞ Your healthcare provider may contact you.
- ∞ A letter from the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program.
- ∞ By contacting your healthcare provider directly.

Contact your healthcare provider if you haven't received your results within a few weeks.

LEARN MORE

For more information about cervical cancer screening go to:
screeningforlife.ca/cervical
or call the Screening Programs'
Client Line at 1-866-727-3926



“And she [the healthcare provider] communicated like, the whole time, you know, what she was doing and that she was almost done and all that kind of stuff.” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings



Get Screened.

Cancer screening saves lives.

Cervical Cancer Screening

What is a Pap test?

A Pap test is a swab of the cervix to check for abnormal cells.

When should I have a Pap test?

You should have a Pap test every three years from age 25 to 69.





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Colorectal Cancer Prevention and Screening





Colorectal Cancer Prevention

Cancer is not caused by one thing. Many different factors can contribute to your risk of cancer, such as family history, lifestyle factors, age, and environmental exposure. Some of these factors we can't control, like our family history or age. The good news is that understanding risk factors can help us make informed choices to support our overall health, like staying active, eating nourishing foods, and avoiding harmful substances. It's not about blame or fear – it's about empowering ourselves to live our best life possible.

“My mom said years and years ago, ‘We never had cancers like this.’ And she says, ‘I blame it on the additives and the preservatives and all the different chemicals that they’re putting in our food.’ All that stuff is going into our bodies.”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

LEARN MORE

For more information on the risk factors for colorectal cancer go to:
cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/colorectal/risks



There are things you can do to limit your risk of developing colorectal cancer:



Limit alcohol use.



Avoid commercial tobacco products.



Stay active. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity every day.



Limit your intake of red meat (beef, pork, lamb, and goat) and processed foods.



Eat foods high in fiber such as fruits, vegetables, beans, and nuts.



Reduce your amount of sedentary behaviour (sitting for long periods of time).

Colorectal Cancer Screening

FIT or Poop Test

WHAT IS A FIT OR POOP TEST?¹¹

A FIT (fecal immunochemical test), also known as a poop test, detects blood in your stool (poop) you cannot see. Blood in your stool is a common sign of colorectal cancer, and if it is found, then you will need another screening test called a colonoscopy (find out more about a colonoscopy test in the next section).

A FIT or poop test can be completed at home. A small sample of stool is collected on a plastic stick. The plastic stick is then placed in a collection bottle and needs to be dropped off at the lab. Step-by-step instructions come with every test.

WHO SHOULD HAVE A FIT OR POOP TEST?¹¹

A FIT or poop test is recommended for **males and females aged 50 to 74 and should be done every year.**

Note: *If you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, your healthcare provider may recommend colorectal cancer screening at an earlier age. It is important to discuss your personal and family history of cancer with a healthcare provider to determine what is right for you.*

HOW TO GET A FIT OR POOP TEST:¹¹

To get a FIT or poop test, you can receive a lab requisition from your doctor and pick up the test from the lab. You can also order a FIT or poop test online if you are between the ages of 50 and 74. Visit screeningforlife.ca/order-free-fit-kit/fit-kit-order-form to find out more and to order a FIT kit.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR FIT OR POOP TEST:¹¹

A FIT or poop test is quick, easy, and painless. It can be done in the comfort of your own home. The only preparation needed is to read the instructions that come with the test.

Questions to ask your healthcare provider about the FIT:

- ∞ When can I expect to receive the results?
- ∞ Who will explain the results?
- ∞ What happens if my results are abnormal?



WAITING FOR YOUR RESULTS:¹²

If you are 50 to 74 years old and have an abnormal result, the Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program will mail you a letter with your results. It is important to book an appointment with a healthcare provider right away to discuss your results. Make sure to bring the letter with you. If you're younger than 50 or older than 74, your doctor will contact you with your results.

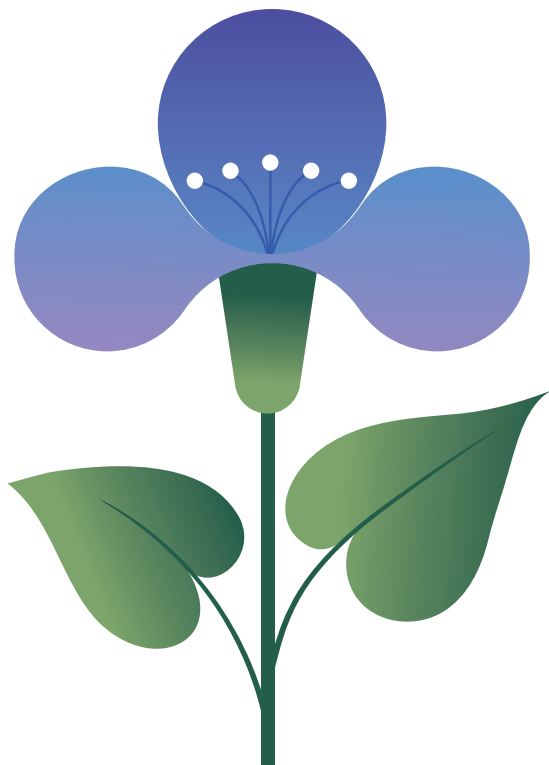
Contact your doctor directly if you have not received your results within a few weeks.

LEARN MORE

For more information about colorectal cancer screening go to: screeningforlife.ca/colorectal or call the Screening Programs' Client Line at 1-866-727-3926



“I just thought that it would possibly help other people understand that this is something that should be done and it’s there to access and it doesn’t cost us anything. And it’s a good tool to help prevent health [problems] as we get older and want to look after ourselves.”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gathering



Get Screened.

Cancer screening saves lives.

Colorectal Cancer Screening

What is a FIT?

A FIT (fecal immunochemical test), or a poop test, checks for traces of blood in your poop you cannot see.

When should I have a FIT?

You should have a FIT every year from age 50 to 74.





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Colonoscopy

WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?¹¹

A colonoscopy is a specialized screening test to see the inside lining of the colon. If you receive abnormal results from a FIT or poop test, if you have concerning symptoms, or if you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, your healthcare provider may recommend a colonoscopy.

During the procedure, a scope (tube) is inserted into the colon. A small camera is attached to the scope so the doctor can see the inside of the colon, and pictures are taken to see if any abnormal growths (polyps) exist.

A colonoscopy can be uncomfortable – many people choose to have sedation for this procedure. You may experience abdominal pains or cramps. The procedure takes 20 to 45 minutes to complete.

Although uncomfortable, a colonoscopy is sometimes necessary because polyps (abnormal growths) could exist with no symptoms. Overtime, these polyps can grow and turn into cancer.

WHO SHOULD GET A COLONOSCOPY?¹¹

A colonoscopy is only recommended if you have a personal or family history of cancer, experience any concerning symptoms, or if any abnormalities (i.e., blood in the stool) are detected from a FIT test. It is important to talk with your doctor to determine if this test is right for you.

HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A COLONOSCOPY:¹¹

You will be given a referral from your doctor. You cannot arrange a colonoscopy on your own.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR COLONOSCOPY:¹¹

Before your appointment:

For the healthcare provider to see inside the colon clearly, you will need to drink a laxative solution that will clean out your rectum and colon. This can cause some discomfort as it works to clean out your colorectal system. Diarrhea and frequent stool passing will occur.

Although uncomfortable, consuming the entirety of this solution is essential for the procedure. If the colon and rectum aren't cleaned out, the doctor may not be able to see any abnormal growths clearly, and the procedure may need to be completed again.

Watch this **video guide** to learn how to prepare for your colonoscopy.



During your appointment:

You may choose to be sedated for this procedure. Most people will receive a mild sedation to alleviate any discomfort but will remain awake and aware of what is happening. A doctor and 1-2 nurses will be present in the room.

You will lie on your left side for this procedure and may be asked to turn onto your back or right side. If polyps (abnormal growths) are found, small growths can be removed and sent to the lab. If larger growths are found, a small piece of them will be removed and sent to the lab to see if they are cancerous or non-cancerous. The remaining growth will need to be removed at a later date.

After your appointment:

After the procedure, it can take 30 to 60 minutes for the effects of the sedation to wear off. You may also have cramping in your abdomen. During this time, you will be taken to a recovery area to rest.

It is helpful to have a support person with you to ask the doctor follow-up questions. Some questions you may want to ask are:

- ∞ Was my colon cleaned out well enough for the doctor to see clearly?
- ∞ Was my whole colon examined?
- ∞ Were all polyps seen on the scope removed, collected, and sent to the lab for testing?
- ∞ When can I expect to receive the results?
- ∞ Who will explain the results?
- ∞ What happens if my results are abnormal?

You cannot drive yourself home from a colonoscopy appointment. Lingering effects of the sedation may last up to 8 hours following the procedure.

WAITING FOR YOUR RESULTS:¹²

The results of your colonoscopy will be reviewed with you after the test; however, your healthcare provider should receive a final report approximately 6 to 8 weeks after completing the colonoscopy. It is important to book a follow-up appointment with your healthcare provider to go over the final report.

LEARN MORE

For more information about colorectal cancer screening go to: screeningforlife.ca/colorectal or call the Screening Programs' Client Line at 1-866-727-3926



“...We need to reframe the way that we put [cancer screening] because right now it’s very much like a chore that you have to do or one more procedure that you have to get done. If we framed it in a different way where, you know, you get this done so that [you’re] taking care of yourself... so that you’re going to be around and you can be healthy and you’re going to be able to see your grandkids or whatever. I think the framing of it needs to change as well....” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings



Get Screened.

Cancer screening saves lives.

Colorectal Cancer Screening

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy allows the doctor to see inside the colon to check for abnormal growth (polyps).

This is a specialized screening test for people with a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, or if abnormalities are found. Talk to your doctor to determine if this test is right for you.





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Important To Know



What if I haven't received my results?

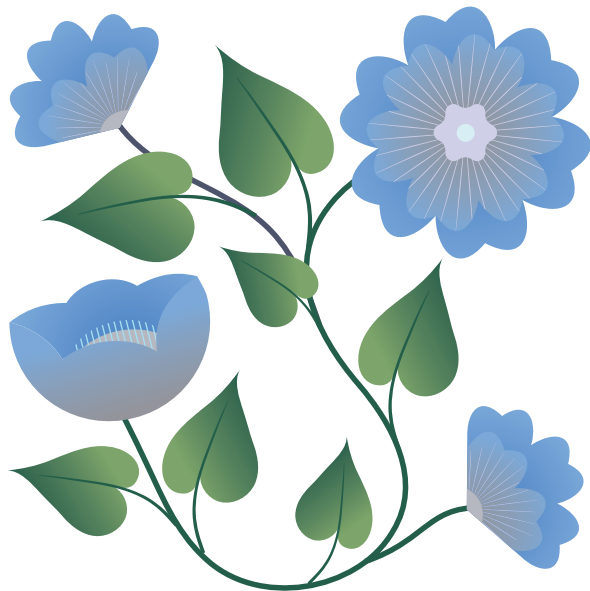
If you have not received your test results within a couple of weeks, you have a couple of options:

- ∞ Contact your healthcare provider directly. It is important to book a follow-up appointment to discuss your results, especially if you haven't received them.
- ∞ Your test results may be available on Alberta's **MyHealth Records**. You can either sign in to your existing account or create a new one. On MyHealth Records, you can access your personal health information, including your lab results, immunizations, and diagnostic reports. If you need help accessing MyHealth Records, contact the MNA's Support and Services Navigator at ssn@metis.org.

Note: Interpreting test results on MyHealth Records can be difficult. If you are unsure what your result means, it is crucial to book an appointment with your healthcare provider.

It is no surprise that our healthcare system is overwhelmed. If you have not received your test results, it is important to follow up with your healthcare provider.





“ Like you shouldn’t wait for somebody to contact you. It’s so easy, for somebody to just... human error happens. And it happens a lot, especially when people are exhausted or working 12-hour days.” – Participant in MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

“ Advocate for yourself! Push, ask for anything you desire at your healthcare appointments.” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Citizens Gathering

What if I don't have a primary healthcare provider?

Many people in Alberta don't have a primary healthcare provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner). The following supports are available if you find yourself in this situation:

Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic

The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic can help you access cancer screening and answer any questions. To learn more, visit the Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic website or scan the QR code below.

Breast Cancer Screening (Mammogram)

If you are aged 45 to 74, you can make a mammogram appointment without a referral from a healthcare provider. To find out where you can get a mammogram, visit the Screening For Life website or scan the QR code below.



Colorectal Cancer Screening (FIT or poop test)

If you are between the ages of 50 and 74, you can order a FIT, or poop test, online. To find out more and order a FIT or poop test, visit the Screening For Life website or scan the QR code below.

Cervical Cancer Screening (Pap smear test)

You can get screened for cervical cancer at many health clinics across Alberta. To find the closest clinic to you, visit the Screening For Life website or scan the QR code below.

Note: If you have difficulty finding a cancer screening clinic, contact the **Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic**. If you must travel a long distance to access screening, check out the MNA's **Medical Travel Program** to determine your eligibility.

What support is available for traveling to healthcare appointments?

Many people in Alberta are required to travel long distances to access healthcare, including cancer screening. The following supports are available if you find yourself in this situation:

MNA Medical Travel Program

The MNA Health Department offers a Medical Travel Program. If you are required to travel more than 100 km to any medical appointment, including cancer screening, you may be eligible for travel support. Find out more by visiting the MNA's website or scan the QR code below.

Mobile Mammogram Clinics

Alberta Health Services offers mobile mammogram clinics in 120 rural communities across Alberta. This means you may be able to get a mammogram close to your home community. You can access this program between the ages of 45 and 74. To find out more, visit the Screening For Life website or scan the QR code below.



The Importance of Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is when you feel empowered to act on your own behalf. It involves asking questions during your healthcare appointment and taking the lead in your health journey, including during cancer screening appointments.

Tips to advocate for yourself:

- ∞ Be proactive. Know your cancer screening eligibility and book appointments when you are due for a screening test.
- ∞ Write down any questions you may have. This will help you remember during your appointment.
- ∞ Bring someone with you to help listen and advocate. A support person may not be allowed in the procedure room but can be there for you before and after the procedure is complete.
- ∞ Ask follow-up questions. A support person can help with this. It may be helpful to share your list of questions with your support person before your appointment. Communicating with your healthcare provider is necessary to take an active role in your health and be fully informed of the next steps.
- ∞ Take notes and whenever possible ask a support person to take notes for you.
- ∞ Understand that you have rights to your personal health information.

Insights on self-advocacy from Métis Albertans

You have the right to know what is happening to your body.

“ Or even asking for a second opinion because you also have that choice too, or maybe you’re not really compatible with whatever doctor, just asking for a second or third opinion. I know they don’t like that, but I mean, it’s your body, right? It’s your health, so...”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

Know when you are due for a screening. Take action to book the appointment.

“ ...if you’re not an advocate for yourself, you just kind of fall through the cracks... if you don’t remember yourself, you’ll just never go. If you don’t go see the doctor again and get a requisition and book the appointment, you’ll never have it screened again.”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gathering

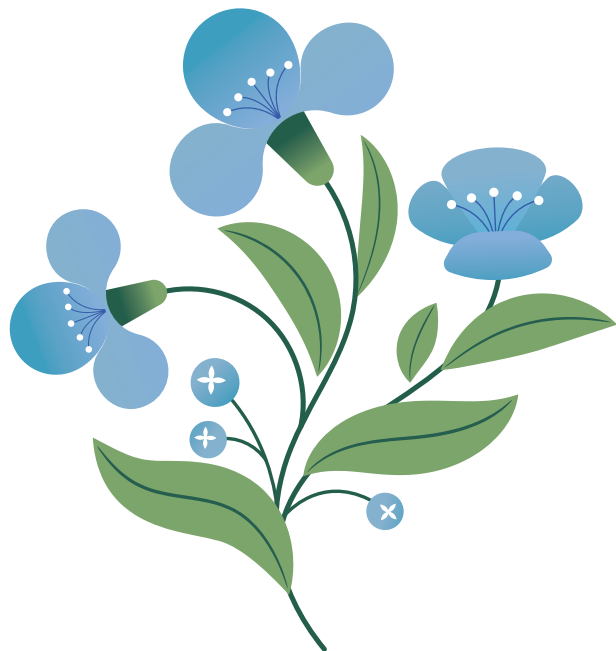


Take care of your family and friends. Let them know about cancer screening.

“...I guess because I had that scare when I was in my early 40s... I began going to the doctor every year and having a yearly check. That kind of clicked with me, and I talked with my friends and my siblings and said, hey, you know, this happened, and all was okay, but you should probably go once a year and have someone look you over.” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

*“ Usually [I hear about cancer screening through] word of mouth, like somebody who’s been through it and so forth. I have a friend who developed breast cancer first in one breast and then the other one. The information she shared with me was all things I didn’t know, and it was very valuable.”
– Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings*





“And I found out later that my mom had experienced having cervical cancer cells at my age when she was younger, and I never even knew. And so, I think for a lot of folks, it’s just not talked about in any way, shape, or form. And having any kind of information is great”. – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings

If you receive a cancer diagnosis

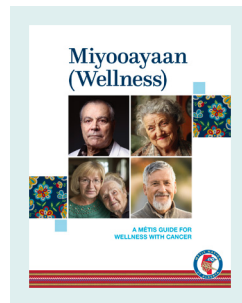
Hearing the words “you have cancer” can be frightening and overwhelming. Many trusted supports and resources are available to help you through this journey.

“ You know, you don’t have to feel lonely. Like even if you want to feel strong and not put this on your family. Like, at least you don’t have to go through it alone... we’re stronger together.” – Participant in the MNA’s 2024 Cancer Screening Gatherings



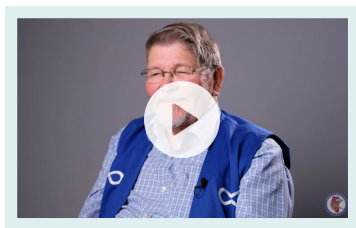
Miyooayaan (Wellness): A Métis Guide for Wellness with Cancer

This guide was developed by the MNA to provide support to Métis Albertans and their families throughout their cancer journeys, from screening and diagnosis to treatment and post-treatment. It also includes helpful information for caregivers. This guide outlines important questions to ask your healthcare provider if you receive a diagnosis. Access the guide on the MNA's website.



Cancer Journey Video Supports

Four Métis Albertans have shared their cancer journeys through videos featured on the MNA website. Each video illustrates a different aspect of the journey and offers tips that may help you on your own journey. Access these video supports on the MNA's website or scan the QR code below.



Medical Travel Program

The MNA offers financial assistance for those who must travel more than 100km to any medical appointment. This program includes mileage reimbursement and short-term accommodations. Access this program on the MNA's website or scan the QR code below.

Wellspring Alberta

Wellspring Alberta offers a variety of support groups and educational sessions, including an **Indigenous Cancer Sharing Circle** to support Indigenous Albertans on their cancer journey. A Wellspring program coordinator and an Elder or Knowledge Keeper facilitate this sharing circle. Access Wellspring Alberta's programs on their website or scan the QR code below.



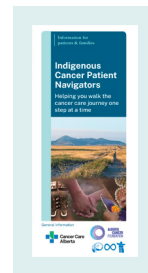
Guide to Cancer Care for Newly Diagnosed Indigenous People

Cancer Care Alberta developed this guide to provide information to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people who have been recently diagnosed with cancer. It includes information on how to prepare to enter cancer care, tips on caring for yourself throughout your cancer journey, and available supports and services. Access this support on Cancer Care Alberta's website or scan the QR code below.



Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigator

Cancer Care Alberta has several Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigators to help First Nations, Inuit, and Métis patients and their families on their cancer journey. Find out more information on accessing this support on Cancer Care Alberta's website or scan the QR code below.

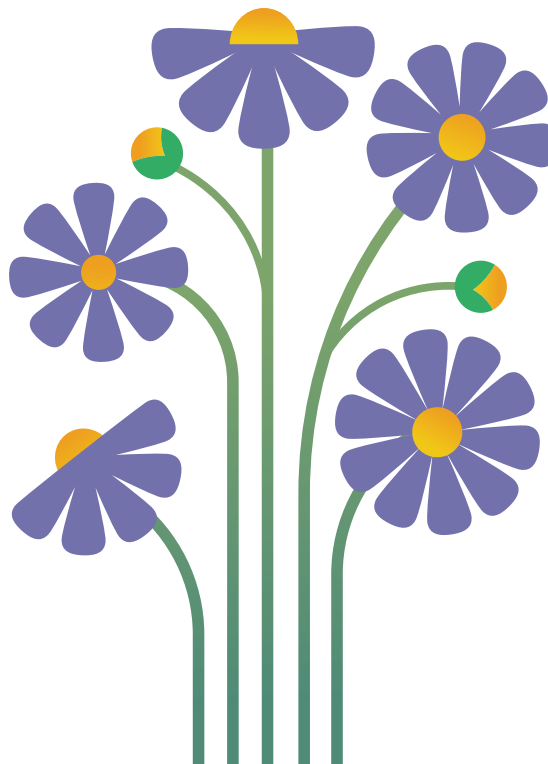


MNA Support and Services Navigator

Connect with the MNA Support and Services Navigator (SSN) at ssn@metis.org. Our SSN will connect you with external resources outside of the MNA to help support you on your cancer journey. Find out more about this program on the MNA's website or scan the QR code below.

Disclaimer

The MNA worked to ensure the accuracy of the information shared in this document. However, cancer screening information, guidelines, and recommendations are subject to change. We encourage Métis Albertans to connect with their healthcare provider to stay current with the recommendations and refer to Alberta Health Services' **Screening for Life** webpage.



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Appointments

DATE	TIME	DOCTOR / CLINIC	ADDRESS	REASON



Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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