

Early detection of colon cancer

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

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

	1,000 women who did not participate in screening	1,000 women who participated in screening
Benefits		
How many women died in total?		No difference: about 184 in both groups.
How many women died of colon cancer?		No difference: about 6 in both groups.
How many women developed advanced colon cancer?	19	17
Harms		
During the examination, how many women experienced moderate to severe pain?	-	260
How many women experienced severe complications (e.g., colon injuries and bleeding, also during the removal of precancerous lesions)?	-	fewer than 1

Short summary: Flexible sigmoidoscopy did not reduce the number of women who died from colon cancer. However, it resulted in 2 fewer women out of 1,000 developing 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>