



March 2019

Dear colleague,

We are pleased to announce that Ontario is transitioning from the guaiac fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) to the fecal immunochemical test (FIT) as the recommended screening test for people at average risk of developing colorectal cancer on June 24, 2019.

FIT is a more sensitive colorectal cancer screening test and detects twice as many advanced neoplasms (colorectal cancer and high risk adenomas) as gFOBT.¹ Patients with an abnormal FIT result should undergo colonoscopy within eight weeks of their abnormal result.

FIT is easier to use and is expected to improve colorectal cancer screening participation in Ontario:

- Only one stool sample is needed.
- There are no medication or dietary restrictions, including no restrictions on anticoagulants and vitamin C.
- The FIT specimen collection device is simple to use and helps reduce contact with stool.

Key changes with the introduction of FIT

- Ordering FIT
 - You will complete a FIT requisition (see enclosed sample) and submit it directly to LifeLabs (fax **1-833-676-1427**). LifeLabs will mail the pre-labelled FIT kit to your patient.
 - Family physicians and other primary care providers will not maintain an inventory of FIT kits. Centralized distribution through LifeLabs will facilitate inventory management and allow for pre-labelling, which will reduce labelling errors.
 - You can use the FIT requisition to indicate if the FIT kit should be mailed to an alternate address, which may differ from your patient's primary mailing address (e.g., health centre or nursing station for patients who live on a First Nation reserve, or a community health centre for home insecure patients).
- Returning a completed FIT
 - Patients will need to mail or drop off the test as soon as possible – ideally within two days of specimen collection – to ensure that it arrives at LifeLabs within 14 days.
 - Patients can drop off their FIT at any LifeLabs Patient Service Centre during business hours – for locations and hours, visit **locations.LifeLabs.com**
 - Patients who live on a First Nation reserve can contact their health centre or nursing station to discuss drop-off options.

Preparing your practice for FIT

- Add the new FIT requisition (**cancercareontario.ca/FITHub**) to your inventory of forms for requesting tests. If your electronic medical record (EMR) lets you import or create custom

¹Tinmouth J, Vella E, Baxter NN, Dubé C, Gould M, Hey A, et al. Colorectal cancer screening in average risk populations: Evidence summary. Toronto (ON): CCO; 2015 November 11. Program in Evidence-based Care Evidence Summary No.: 15-14.

- electronic forms, add the new FIT requisition to your list of available forms for requesting tests. You can also ask your EMR vendor about creating the form within your EMR.
- Call LifeLabs at **1-833-676-1426** if you do not routinely receive laboratory supplies or test results from them.
- Be aware of any regional strategies to ensure timely access to colonoscopy for your patients with a positive (i.e., abnormal) FIT. A list of facilities funded by Cancer Care Ontario to provide colonoscopies for patients with an abnormal FIT result will be available at cancercareontario.ca/FITcolonoscopy when FIT is launched.
- **Do not delay screening!** Continue to screen your patients with gFOBT until FIT is available through the ColonCancerCheck program. Do not distribute gFOBTs after FIT launches.

Start to screen with FIT June 24, 2019

- See the enclosed “ColonCancerCheck Guide to Average Risk Screening with FIT in Ontario” handout for details on how to screen with FIT.
- Only use the new FIT requisition and submit it to LifeLabs. Do not use OHIP requisitions or submit them to other labs.
- LifeLabs will send the results directly to you. Cancer Care Ontario will continue to send your patients their results.
- For billing code updates, visit health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/ohip/sob/

Resources available to you

- Information about FIT, including directions on how to remove gFOBT inventory from your office, will be available on the FIT Resource Hub at cancercareontario.ca/FITHub
- If you have questions for LifeLabs, call **1-833-676-1426**.
- For more cancer screening resources for primary care providers, including information on how to sign up for the Screening Activity Report and physician-linked correspondence, visit cancercareontario.ca/pcresources
- Contact the ColonCancerCheck program at screenforlife@cancercare.on.ca or **1-866-662-9233**.

Thank you for your commitment and ongoing support.

Sincerely,

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Enclosures:

- ColonCancerCheck Guide to Average Risk Screening with FIT in Ontario;
- FIT instructions for patients;
- FIT requisition;
- Frequently asked questions about FIT and the decommissioning of gFOBT;
- New ColonCancerCheck recommendations on post-polypectomy colonoscopy surveillance; and
- Registration form to accept unattached patients.