

**Colorectal cancer test use among persons aged > or = 50 years--United States, 2001.**

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States. The lifetime risk for having colorectal cancer diagnosed is 6%. Screening measures decrease the incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer by detecting early disease and removing precancerous lesions. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends routine cancer screening for U.S. adults aged > or = 50 years with one or a combination of the following screening options: annual home fecal occult blood testing (FOBT), sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, colonoscopy every 10 years, or double contrast barium enema every 5 years. To estimate rates and evaluate trends for colorectal cancer test use among U.S. adults aged > or = 50 years, CDC analyzed data from the 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) on the use of FOBT and sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy and compared the data for 2001 with those for 1997 and 1999. This report summarizes the results of that analysis, which indicate that despite small increases in the self-reported use of colorectal cancer tests, screening rates remain low. Efforts to increase awareness and encourage regular colorectal cancer screening should continue.

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