



Multi-Cancer Detection Tests

A new type of blood test that may find multiple kinds of cancer

Research is needed to see if using multi-cancer detection (MCD) tests can find cancers and save lives.

How does cancer screening work?

Cancer screening uses tests to check for cancer or signs of cancer risk before a person has symptoms. Cancer screening tests are not stand-alone tests. For example, after a positive cancer screening test, more tests are needed to make a diagnosis of cancer.

How do MCD tests work?

Typically using a sample of blood, these tests measure biological substances released by tumor cells that indicate the possibility of cancer. No MCD tests screen for every type of cancer, and right now each test only includes some cancer types.

Does a positive MCD test result mean I have cancer?

No. Like any method of cancer screening, MCD tests make a prediction about the presence of cancer. After an individual receives a positive MCD result, more tests are needed to confirm a cancer diagnosis. These tests may include imaging or invasive procedures.

Does a negative MCD test result mean I don't have cancer?

Not quite. In some cases, people with a negative test result have been diagnosed with cancer later on. No MCD test can find every type of cancer.

What cancers can each MCD test potentially find?

It depends on which MCD test you take. Each MCD test targets a different group of cancers. For example, one test may look for colorectal, bladder, and prostate cancer, and a different MCD test may look for lung, colorectal, and pancreatic cancer. Currently, there are no MCD tests that screen for every possible type of cancer.

Should I still get regular standard-of-care cancer screenings after having an MCD test?

Yes. Standard-of-care screenings are recommended regardless of whether you have an MCD test. This includes regular screenings for the following cancers: breast, cervical, colorectal, and lung.

Are MCD tests available to the public?

Yes. Some are available to the public and many MCD tests are in development. To date, no MCD tests have been authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). There are no national guidelines for the use of MCD tests.

What research is NCI doing on MCDs?

The National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Cancer Screening Research Network (CSRN) is developing clinical trials to study emerging screening technologies, such as MCD tests, to determine if these technologies can help save lives.

Visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more.



prevention.cancer.gov/w/questions-answers