

Broadcast- New FDA-approved blood test could boost screening for deadly colorectal cancer

ANCHOR LEAD IN:

Colon cancer screening rates are at 63% for people 45 and over. Now, there's hope that rate will increase with a new blood test recently approved by the FDA. But a Bloomington gastroenterologist cautions – the new test does NOT have a good rate of detecting pre-cancerous cells to catch the second-deadliest form of cancer EARLY – when it can be treated more successfully.

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A colonoscopy is the best way to detect colorectal cancer, but some people are scared or just won't get the invasive procedure.

Dr. Hari (HAR-ee) Gopakumar says the blood test could be a good option for people who are at average risk and otherwise won't get a colonoscopy and won't try the stool-based test. But, he says the new blood test detects only 13% of pre-cancerous cells so a stool test would be a better option ...

"Our goal is to be able to pick up these pre-cancerous lesions way before they even have a chance to become cancer and then treat them because at that stage, it's relatively easy to treat the polyp – you take the polyp out. Nothing after that except maybe a follow up colonoscopy. That is where the difference comes in." (:19)

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Best advice regarding the new blood test – have a conversation with your doctor to figure out the best option based on your personal risk for colon cancer.