

Reimbursement Policy

Policy Number: RPLAB071

Policy Title: Colorectal Cancer Screening

Approval Date: May 15, 2026

Effective Date: Sept. 4, 2026

Policy Disclaimer

If a conflict arises between a Reimbursement Policy and any Plan document under which a member is entitled to covered services, the Plan document will govern. If a conflict arises between a reimbursement policy and any provider contract pursuant to which a provider participates in and/or provides covered services to eligible member(s) and/or plans, the provider's contract will govern. "Plan documents" include, but are not limited to, Certificates of Health Care Benefits, Benefit Booklets, Summary Plan Descriptions, and other coverage documents. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas may use reasonable discretion interpreting and applying this policy to services being delivered in a particular case. BCBSTX has full and final discretionary authority for their interpretation and application to the extent provided under any applicable Plan documents.

Providers are responsible for submitting accurate documentation of services performed. Providers are expected to submit claims for services rendered using valid code combinations from Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act approved code sets. Claims should be coded appropriately according to industry standard coding guidelines including, but not limited to: Uniform Billing Editor, American Medical Association, Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) Assistant, Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System, ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS, National Drug Codes, Diagnosis Related Group guidelines, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual, CCI table edits and other CMS guidelines.

Claims are subject to the code edit protocols for services and procedures billed. Claim submissions are subject to claim review, including but not limited to, any terms of benefit coverage, provider contract language, medical policies, and reimbursement policies, as well as coding software logic. Upon request, the provider is urged to submit any additional documentation.

Description

The Plan has implemented certain lab management reimbursement criteria. Not all requirements apply to each product. Providers are urged to review Plan documents for eligible coverage for services rendered.

Reimbursement Information

1. For asymptomatic individuals 45 to 75 years of age, annual screening for colorectal cancer with a fecal immunochemical test/FIT (preferred) **or** a guaiac fecal occult blood test/gFOBT **may be reimbursable**.
2. Colorectal cancer screening using FIT-DNA (Cologuard™ or Cologuard Plus™ – once every 3 years) **may be reimbursable**.
3. The use of methylated Septin 9 (ColoVantage) for colorectal cancer screening **is not reimbursable**.
4. For average risk, asymptomatic individuals over 75 years of age, colorectal cancer screening **is not reimbursable**.
5. Colorectal cancer screening using **any** of the following techniques **is not reimbursable**:
 - a. Screening for anal cytologic abnormalities (anal pap smear).
 - b. Screening for anal HPV infection.
 - c. Screening using cell-free DNA techniques (e.g., Guardant Shield™).

Procedure Codes

The following is not an all-encompassing code list. The inclusion of a code does not guarantee it is a covered service or eligible for reimbursement.

Code	Description
81327	SEPT9 GEN PRMTR MTHYLTN ALYS
81528	ONCOLOGY COLORECTAL SCR
82270	OCCULT BLOOD FECES
82274	ASSAY TEST FOR BLOOD FECAL
87624	HPV HI-RISK TYP POOLED RSLT
87625	HPV TYPES 16 & 18 ONLY
87626	HPV SEP HI-RSK TYP&POOL RSLT

88112	CYTOPATH CELL ENHANCE TECH
0464U	ONC CLRCT SCR QRTSA DNA MRK
0537U	ONC CLRCT CA CFDNA >2500 DMR

CPT copyright 2025 American Medical Association (AMA). All rights reserved. CPT is a registered trademark of the AMA.

References

1. Kuipers EJ, Grady WM, Lieberman D, et al. Colorectal cancer. *Nat Rev Dis Primers*. Nov 5 2015;1:15065. doi:10.1038/nrdp.2015.65
2. Shaukat A, Kahi CJ, Burke CA, Rabeneck L, Sauer BG, Rex DK. ACG Clinical Guidelines: Colorectal Cancer Screening 2021. *Official journal of the American College of Gastroenterology | ACG*. 2021;116(3):458-479. doi:10.14309/ajg.0000000000001122
3. ACS. Key Statistics for Colorectal Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colorectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>
4. Doubeni C. Screening for colorectal cancer. Updated Jan 23, 2025. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/tests-for-screening-for-colorectal-cancer?source=history>
5. Robertson DJ, Lee JK, Boland CR, et al. Recommendations on Fecal Immunochemical Testing to Screen for Colorectal Neoplasia: A Consensus Statement by the US Multi-Society Task Force on Colorectal Cancer. *Gastroenterology*. Apr 2017;152(5):1217-1237.e3. doi:10.1053/j.gastro.2016.08.053
6. Exact Sciences. Cologuard. <https://www.cologuardhcp.com/about/clinical-offer>
7. R G. Sensitive detection of colorectal cancer in peripheral blood by septin 9 DNA methylation assay. 2008;doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0003759
8. Imperiale TF, Ransohoff DF, Itzkowitz SH, et al. Multitarget stool DNA testing for colorectal-cancer screening. *N Engl J Med*. Apr 3 2014;370(14):1287-97. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1311194
9. Grützmann R, Molnar B, Pilarsky C, et al. Sensitive Detection of Colorectal Cancer in Peripheral Blood by Septin 9 DNA Methylation Assay. *PLOS ONE*. 2008;3(11):e3759. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0003759
10. Health G. Shield™: Colorectal Cancer Screening Test. <https://shieldcancerscreen.com/wp-content/uploads/LBL-000351-R1-Shield-Provider-Labeling.pdf>
11. Guardant Health. Shield™ blood-based colorectal cancer screening test. Guardant Health, Inc. https://guardanthealth.com/wp-content/uploads/Guardant_Shield_FactSheet-1.pdf
12. Exact Sciences. BLUE-C: A PIVOTAL CLINICAL TRIAL. <https://www.exactsciences.com/-/media/project/exactcore/documents/blue-c-backgrounder.pdf>
13. Exact Sciences. FDA Approves Exact Sciences' Cologuard Plus™ Test, Setting A New Benchmark in Non-Invasive Colorectal Cancer Screening. <https://www.exactsciences.com/newsroom/press-releases/fda-approves-exact-sciences-cologuard-plus-test>

-
14. Imperiale TF, Porter K, Zella J, et al. Next-Generation Multitarget Stool DNA Test for Colorectal Cancer Screening. *N Engl J Med*. Mar 14 2024;390(11):984-993. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2310336
 15. Tanya K. Stool DNA methylation assays in colorectal cancer screening. *World J Gastroenterol*. 2015;doi:10.3748/wjg.v21.i35.10057
 16. Hayama T, Hama K, Ozawa T, et al. Ceramide synthase CERS4 gene downregulation is associated with KRAS mutation in colorectal cancer. *Sci Rep*. Sep 27 2023;13(1):16249. doi:10.1038/s41598-023-43557-1
 17. Müller D, Gyórfy B. EpigenPlot: An interactive web platform for DNA methylation-based biomarker and drug target discovery in colorectal cancer. *British Journal of Pharmacology*. 2025;182(7):1452-1465. doi:10.1111/bph.17455
 18. Imperiale TF, Ransohoff DF, Itzkowitz SH, et al. Multitarget Stool DNA Testing for Colorectal-Cancer Screening. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2014;370(14):1287-1297. doi:doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1311194
 19. Imperiale TF, Porter K, Zella J, et al. Next-Generation Multitarget Stool DNA Test for Colorectal Cancer Screening. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2024;390(11):984-993. doi:doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2310336
 20. Burch JA, Soares-Weiser K, St John DJB, et al. Diagnostic accuracy of faecal occult blood tests used in screening for colorectal cancer: a systematic review. *Journal of Medical Screening*. 2007/09/01 2007;14(3):132-137. doi:10.1258/096914107782066220
 21. Shapiro JA, Bobo JK, Church TR, et al. A Comparison of Fecal Immunochemical and High-Sensitivity Guaiac Tests for Colorectal Cancer Screening. *Am J Gastroenterol*. Nov 2017;112(11):1728-1735. doi:10.1038/ajg.2017.285
 22. Kisiel JB, Gagrat ZD, Krockenberger M, et al. Can second-generation multitarget stool DNA panels reliably detect colorectal cancer and advanced precancerous lesions? *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2022/02/01 2022;40(4_suppl):63-63. doi:10.1200/JCO.2022.40.4_suppl.063
 23. USPSTF. USPSTF Final Recommendation Statement. Updated May 18, 2021. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/document/RecommendationStatementFinal/colorectal-cancer-screening>
 24. Faivre J, Dancourt V, Lejeune C, et al. Reduction in colorectal cancer mortality by fecal occult blood screening in a French controlled study¹. *Gastroenterology*. 2004;126(7):1674-1680. doi:10.1053/j.gastro.2004.02.018
 25. Kim SY, Kim HS, Kim YT, et al. Colonoscopy Versus Fecal Immunochemical Test for Reducing Colorectal Cancer Risk: A Population-Based Case-Control Study. *Clin Transl Gastroenterol*. Apr 30 2021;12(5):e00350. doi:10.14309/ctg.0000000000000350
 26. Gagrat ZD, Krockenberger M, Bhattacharya A, et al. Next-generation Multi-target Stool DNA Panel Accurately Detects Colorectal Cancer and Advanced Precancerous Lesions. *Cancer Prev Res (Phila)*. Mar 4 2024;17(3):119-126. doi:10.1158/1940-6207.CAPR-23-0285
 27. USPSTF. Colorectal Cancer: Screening. Updated May 18, 2021. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening>
 28. USPSTF. About the USPSTF. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/about-uspstf>

-
29. ACS. American Cancer Society Guideline for Colorectal Cancer Screening. Updated January 29, 2024. 2025. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/acs-recommendations.html>
 30. Patel SG, May FP, Anderson JC, et al. Updates on Age to Start and Stop Colorectal Cancer Screening: Recommendations From the U.S. Multi-Society Task Force on Colorectal Cancer. *Gastroenterology*. Jan 2022;162(1):285-299. doi:10.1053/j.gastro.2021.10.007
 31. NCCN. Colorectal Cancer Screening Version 2. 2025. Updated June 24, 2025. https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/colorectal_screening.pdf
 32. FDA. Epi ProColon. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfpma/pma_template.cfm?id=p130001
 33. FDA. SUMMARY OF SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS DATA (SSED). Food & Drug Administration. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cdrh_docs/pdf13/P130017B.pdf
 34. FDA. SUMMARY OF SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS DATA. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cdrh_docs/pdf23/P230043B.pdf

Policy History

Approval Date	Description
05/15/2026	09/04/2026; Document updated with literature review. Reimbursement Information unchanged. Added code 87626 and removed code 0500T. References revised.
04/28/2025	08/08/2025; Document updated with literature review. The following changes were made to Reimbursement Information: #2: added Cologuard Plus™ as reimbursable once every 3 years; #5: added "Screening using cell-free DNA techniques (e.g., Guardant Shield™) as not reimbursable. Added codes 0464U and 0537U. References revised.
09/13/2024	01/01/2025: New policy.