A colonoscopy should be repeated every 10 years so that any polyps can be removed before they turn cancerous. If any polyps are found, the colonoscopy may be repeated sooner. A FIT should be completed annually.

DO NOT WAIT FOR SYMPTOMS

Patients should not wait for symptoms, such as blood in their stool or changes in their bowel habits, to screen for colon cancer. “This cancer is so common that we want to screen the entire population,” says UCLA Health gastroenterologist Dr. Lynn Connolly.

Talk to your primary care physician or gastroenterologist about which test is right for you. Once a colonoscopy order is placed in the system, you can call 310-825-7540 to schedule your procedure, or you can request a FIT Kit at your next primary care or gastroenterology appointment.

Find out more: uclahealth.org/colon-cancer-screening
EVERY AVERAGE-RISK person who is 50 or older should be regularly screened for colon cancer. Yet 1 in 3 people have not taken this crucial step to protect themselves and support their long-term health.

UCLA Health is committed to changing that, and getting more patients to complete a colonoscopy or stool-based screening test. Here is how we plan to achieve this goal:

**More locations.** UCLA Health patients no longer have to travel to Westwood or Santa Monica to see a digestive disease specialist. We now have gastroenterologists available to see patients in 10 locations throughout greater Los Angeles, with two more offices opening this year.

**Convenient options.** UCLA Health patients can now have a colonoscopy performed at one of our outpatient surgical centers in West Hills, Santa Clarita or Torrance. Physicians can also perform this procedure at UCLA Health hospitals in Westwood or Santa Monica, or in some cases, at an outside surgical center. Our team can help you schedule this procedure at the time and place that is most convenient for you.

**Resources and support.** Our gastroenterologists work closely with dietitians, genetic counselors and surgical oncologists to ensure that every patient receives support tailored to their specific needs.

UCLA Health also provides additional resources, both online and in person. We recently launched a website that details everything you need to know about colon cancer screening, prevention and treatment. We are also hosting dozens of informational events tied to our colon cancer campaign.

Get involved and share your story through social media by using the hashtag #UCLAColonChampion.
Kells Jesse, a production designer who lives in Venice, says that in recent years, he and his wife, Sylvia, have made major lifestyle changes to prioritize their health. They optimized their nutrition and now eat a mostly vegan, plant-based diet; incorporated more exercise into their routines; and last spring, scheduled their routine colon cancer screening tests.

While Jesse had his first screening right at 50, the doctor who removed some precancerous growths called polyps, told him to return for a follow-up test in three years. Unfortunately, life got in the way, and he waited an extra two. “I work a lot and lead a busy life,” he says, “so I always had an excuse to put it off.”

In April, he finally got a referral from his primary care physician to see Dr. Mary Farid in Santa Monica. At his appointment in June, they discussed his overdue colonoscopy and some other GI issues, and then scheduled the procedure. When Dr. Farid performed the colonoscopy in September, she saw a suspicious-looking lesion that she couldn’t easily remove. “I wasn’t 100% certain it was cancer,” she says. “But we definitely needed to rule it out.”

She removed a small tissue sample to biopsy, which pathology later confirmed was adenocarcinoma. Jesse was shocked by his diagnosis. “When I heard the word ‘cancer,’ I couldn’t grasp it,” he says. His wife jumped into action, and worked with Dr. Farid to schedule a CT scan to make sure the cancer had not spread. Dr. Farid also referred Jesse to a surgeon who could remove the lesion.

On many fronts, Jesse was lucky. While the CT scan showed a slight shadow on his liver, a follow-up MRI concluded that it was nothing to worry about. Then, after the diseased section of Jesse’s colon was removed in October, pathology confirmed the cancer had not invaded his colon’s walls or spread to his lymph nodes.

Based on these findings, Jesse was told that he did not need chemotherapy and could consider himself cancer-free. After an emotional few months, he says he couldn’t be happier with the results. “This experience changed my life.”

Now, he wants to change other peoples’ lives too by sharing his story. “Friends always ask me if I had any symptoms,” Jesse says, “and the answer is no. But that’s just the point. You don’t want to wait for symptoms. You want to catch colon cancer early so that you can be cured.”

*Patient Story*

**Colon Cancer Cured Due to Routine Screening**

Kells Jesse and his wife, Sylvia Castillo-Jesse, shop for produce at the Mar Vista farmer’s market.
DIGESTIVE DISEASE SPECIALISTS, called gastroenterologists, diagnose and treat medical conditions that affect the GI system and can cause nausea, abdominal pain or trouble swallowing. They are also the physicians that perform colonoscopies and diagnose and treat colon cancer.

As part of UCLA Health’s expansion throughout the greater Los Angeles region, we have added digestive disease doctors who are part of the integrated Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Division of Digestive Diseases to many community practices. These physicians are available to discuss colon cancer screening options. They also perform colonoscopies at UCLA hospitals and outpatient surgical centers.

The adjacent map details where you can find gastroenterologists in your area. Your primary care physician can provide a referral to a GI specialist if necessary.

Find out more: uclahealth.org/gastro

DIGESTIVE DISEASES LOCATIONS

2. Burbank 2625 Alameda Ave., Suite 300 818-843-9020
3. Encino 15503 Ventura Blvd., Suite 170 818-461-8148
4. Porter Ranch 19950 Rinaldi St., Suite 300 818-271-2400
5. Santa Clarita 25775 McBean Pkwy., Suite 214 661-255-2420
6. Santa Monica 1223 16th St., Suite 3100 310-582-6240
7. Thousand Oaks 100 Moody Ct., Suite 200 805-418-3500
8. Torrance 2780 Skypark Dr., Suite 125 310-530-8013
9. Westlake Village 1250 La Venta Dr., Suite 211 805-494-6920
10. Westwood 100 Medical Plaza, Suite 205 310-208-5400

DIGITAL DIGEST

DIRECT SCHEDULING NOW AVAILABLE

Want to discuss colon cancer screening options with your primary care physician? If you are an established patient, you can now directly schedule primary care appointments through the UCLA Health patient portal. Here’s how:

1. Sign into the patient portal at my.uclahealth.org or launch the MyChart app
2. Select “Schedule An Appointment” from the quick links
3. Click “Self Schedule an Appointment” from the available options
4. Pick which UCLA Health provider you want to see
5. Select a day and time that works with your schedule
6. Fill in some details about your visit
7. Confirm that the appointment details are correct, and hit “Schedule”

Try this new feature: my.uclahealth.org
Colonoscopies and other outpatient gastrointestinal procedures can now be performed in three convenient UCLA Health locations outside of Westwood and Santa Monica. After your primary care physician or gastroenterologist orders your procedure in the system, call 310-825-7540 to schedule your appointment.

**SANTA CLARITA**
25775 McBean Pkwy., Suite 115
Valencia, CA 91355
Phone: 661-255-2420
Hours: Monday - Friday: 6:30 am - 3:30 pm
Parking: Free parking available
Web: uclahealth.org/santa-clarita

**TORRANCE**
2780 Skypark Drive, Suite 125
Torrance, CA 90505
Phone: 310-530-8001
Hours: Monday - Friday: 8 am - 5 pm
Parking: Free parking available
Web: uclahealth.org/torrance

**WEST HILLS**
7320 Woodlake Ave., Suite 320
West Hills, CA 91307
Phone: 818-436-7686
Hours: Monday - Friday: 8 am - 5 pm
Parking: Free parking available
Web: uclahealth.org/west-hills

**FEATURED SPECIALTY**
**CANCER GENETIC COUNSELORS**

Approximately 5% to 10% of colon cancers are hereditary, which means that a genetic risk was passed from parent to child. If someone in your family has been diagnosed with colon cancer—specifically a parent or sibling—let your physician know. You may be referred to a genetic counselor, who can provide a personalized risk assessment to help you and your physician better understand your genetic risk for being diagnosed with colon cancer. This information will help them optimize your colon cancer screening plan.

Where: Bowyer Oncology Clinic
200 UCLA Medical Plaza, Suite 120
Phone: 310-825-5287
More info: uclahealth.org/colorectalsurgery

**FEATURED SPECIALTY**
**DIGESTIVE DISEASES NUTRITION**

Two registered dietitian nutritionists, Nancee Jaffe and Janelle Smith, lead the digestive diseases nutrition team. Both provide dietary support to patients with various GI disorders, including colon cancer. Referrals are not required, but some patients might require authorization. Follow-up sessions are offered in person or remotely via telemedicine.

Westwood: 100 Med Plaza, Suite 345; 310-206-6279
Santa Monica: 1223 16th St., Suite 310; 310-582-6240
More info: uclahealth.org/gastro/nutrition
**CLINICAL UPDATE**

**COLONOSCOPY TIMELINE**

**WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE**

1. **BEFORE THE PROCEDURE**
   - Stop drinking clear liquids 2 hours before your procedure.
   - Wear something comfortable to your appointment.
   - Check in to the hospital or outpatient surgical center.
   - Change into a gown, and have an IV placed by a nurse.
   - Meet with your physician and your anesthesiologist to go over the procedure and ask any final questions.

2. **1 DAY BEFORE**
   - Follow bowel prep instructions to clear out your colon before your procedure, and stick to a clear liquid diet. If your colon is not completely emptied prior to the procedure, there is a chance that the doctor will miss an abnormality.

3. **2 DAYS BEFORE**
   - Pick up your bowel prep medication from a pharmacy, per your physician’s orders.
   - Confirm your ride home.

4. **3 DAYS BEFORE**
   - Start a low-residue diet and limit high-fiber foods.

5. **SCHEDULE YOUR PROCEDURE**
   - After your primary care physician places an order in the system, you can schedule your colonoscopy by calling 310-825-7540. Make sure someone is available to drive you home, and remember to take the day off work.

6. **DURING THE PROCEDURE**
   - Undergo anesthesia and be put in a twilight sleep to minimize discomfort.
   - Your physician will use a thin, flexible tube with a light and camera attached, called a colonoscope, to look inside your colon for abnormalities.
   - Your physician will remove polyps and abnormal tissue, which will be sent to a pathology lab for testing.
   - The procedure takes 15 to 30 minutes, and the entire appointment takes 2 to 3 hours.

7. **AFTER THE PROCEDURE**
   - You will be observed in a recovery room until the anesthesia wears off.
   - When you are discharged, you must have an adult accompany you home, even if you take a cab. Staff must be able to contact this person prior to your procedure.
   - You can resume your normal diet, unless otherwise directed.

8. **ONE DAY AFTER**
   - Return to work.

9. **1-2 WEEKS AFTER**
   - You will receive biopsy results within a few weeks of your procedure. Your physician will also let you know the recommended time frame for your next colonoscopy.