

# GI referrals and resources

In light of endoscopy pressures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, please see below for (1) preferred referral practices for colorectal cancer screening and (2) resources available to support primary care providers and patients.

## Recommendations for Colorectal Cancer Screening Referrals

Category	Recommendation	Notes
<b>Average Risk<sup>1</sup></b> age 50-74	Continue to screen with FIT (see <a href="#">Screening For Life</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average risk patients should NOT be referred for colonoscopy in the absence of a positive FIT</li> <li>FIT should NOT be used to evaluate anemia (see <a href="#">Anemia Guidelines</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>Personal History</b> Low Risk Adenoma <sup>2</sup> (LRA)	Offer FIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveillance colonoscopy for post-polypectomy LRA and HRA will be paused until current backlog issue is resolved</li> </ul>
High Risk Adenoma <sup>3</sup> (HRA) -OR- strong family history suggesting genetic syndrome	Flag for future referral for colonoscopy	
<b>Family history<sup>4</sup> of CRC/polyps</b>	Offer FIT	

## Primary care supports

For patients with lower risk GI and hepatology conditions, please use the evidence-based primary care pathways to support diagnosis and management in primary care, prior to initiating a referral.

- Pathways are available for abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, dyspepsia, GERD, hepatitis C, H. pylori, IBS, and NAFLD.
- Pathways are available at [www.ahs.ca/dhpathways](http://www.ahs.ca/dhpathways), on the ConnectMD website ([www.pcnconnectmd.com](http://www.pcnconnectmd.com)), and on the Specialist Link website ([www.specialistlink.ca](http://www.specialistlink.ca)).

Non-urgent advice services are available to support primary care providers in caring for patients with digestive health conditions and to clarify when a referral is required:

- Specialist LINK provides phone advice in the Calgary Zone ([www.specialistlink.ca](http://www.specialistlink.ca) or call 1-844-962-5465)
- ConnectMD provides phone advice in the Edmonton and North Zones ([www.pcnconnectmd.com](http://www.pcnconnectmd.com) or call 1-844-633-2263)
- eReferral Advice Request is available across the province, and provides written advice through Netcare (see <https://www.albertanetcare.ca/documents/Getting-Started-Advice-Requests-FAQs.pdf>)

For any questions or concerns, please contact [digestivehealth.scn@ahs.ca](mailto:digestivehealth.scn@ahs.ca).

<sup>1</sup> Average risk – asymptomatic, no family history of colorectal cancer (CRC) and no prior personal history of CRC or polyps.

<sup>2</sup> Tubular adenoma or sessile serrated polyp less than 10 mm in size and less than 5 in number without dysplasia.

<sup>3</sup> Tubular adenoma or sessile serrated polyp greater than 10 mm in size, 5 or more in number or with high grade dysplasia.

<sup>4</sup> Family history including first- and second-degree relatives regardless of age.



Alberta Colorectal Cancer Screening Program

