

## Healthy Conversations

October 2017

### No excuses, no regrets

*Don't delay colorectal cancer screening*

When it comes to cancer, colorectal is typically not the first type of cancer that comes to mind. But did you know colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women? It's also the second-leading cause of cancer death in men and third leading cause in women. Most doctors recommend a colonoscopy as the first preventive step in detecting colon cancer.

There are alternatives to having a colonoscopy. These include stool-based tests which may be as effective if used properly. These include:

- FOBT (high-sensitivity fecal occult blood test) — Looks for hidden blood.
- FIT (fecal immunochemical test) — Checks for the protein hemoglobin.
- FIT-DNA — Looks for hemoglobin and abnormal DNA.

### What to look for

It is important to go to a doctor if you experience any of the following:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation or narrowing of the stool, that lasts for more than a few days
- A feeling that you need to have a bowel movement that is not relieved by doing so
- Rectal bleeding
- Dark stools, or blood in the stool
- Cramping or abdominal (belly) pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Unintended weight loss

### Detection saves lives

For Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield member Craig Grandgenett, paying attention to these symptoms allowed him to catch a tumor – today he is feeling 100 percent. For former news reporter Angie Hunt, a FIT test saved her life. Doctors detected blood and a follow-up colonoscopy found she had colorectal cancer. She had surgery to remove a foot of her colon, along with 14 lymph nodes. Further tests confirmed the cancer likely had not spread.

To see more about Craig and Angie's stories, visit [wellmark.com/blue](http://wellmark.com/blue) to see a video featuring their life-saving message about colon cancer screenings.