

# Open Access Colonoscopy Screening Program



Southwest General is offering a new Open Access Colonoscopy Screening Program that provides eligible candidates open scheduling for screening colonoscopies.

## About the Program

The Open Access Program provides an alternative way for healthy individuals, aged 50 and older, to schedule a screening colonoscopy procedure on their own without having to obtain a physician consult prior to booking the appointment. Patients who qualify for the Open Access Program are scheduled based on the next available appointment with participating physicians, who are on the Medical Staff at Southwest General.

One important benefit of the program is that it can be ideal for busy lifestyles because you control your scheduling options without having to see a physician first. It is important to understand that while the Open Access Program is intended for screening procedures, any participating physician may allow a current patient to go through the Open Access Program for a diagnostic or surveillance colonoscopy, if applicable. However, according to billing/coding guidelines, if a colonoscopy was performed in the past, the patient may be responsible for an out-of-pocket cost when deemed as diagnostic and not preventative. Depending on insurance plan coverage, professional/ancillary services (pathology) may have an additional out of pocket cost.

## Qualifications

Qualified candidates for the Open Access Program are:

- Men and women, aged 50 and older
- Individuals with NO gastrointestinal symptoms
- Individuals with NO significant illness

## Steps to Being Screened

First, you must find out if you qualify for an Open Access Colonoscopy Screening. To do this:

1. Print and complete the mandatory form and questionnaire.
2. Either fax the form and questionnaire to **440-816-8677** or mail to:

Southwest General Surgery Scheduling  
ATTN: Open Access Program  
18697 Bagley Road  
Middleburg Heights, OH 44130

If you meet the eligibility requirements for the Open Access Program, an Endoscopy Department staff member will contact you to make arrangements for your procedure.

Please contact the Endoscopy Department at **440-816-8086** if you have any questions.

## Did You Know?

- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.
- Colorectal cancer usually starts from polyps in the colon or rectum. Over time, polyps can become cancerous. A colorectal screening finds polyps and allows the physician to remove the growth before it becomes cancerous.
- Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), screening colonoscopies are covered by private health plans even when a polyp is removed.

## What Are the Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer?

- Blood in or on stool
- Change in bowel habits
- Unexplained weight loss
- General abdominal discomfort
- Frequent gas or pain
- Feeling that the bowel is not completely empty
- Weakness or tiredness
- Nausea or vomiting

*If you experience any of the symptoms above, consult your physician BEFORE scheduling a screening colonoscopy.*

