

Knowing genetic risk of cancer doesn't change behavior

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(HealthDay)—Knowledge of genetic colorectal cancer (CRC) risk does not influence screening behavior, according to research published in the Oct. 21 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The researchers focused on 783 people aged 50 to 79 who hadn't been screened for CRC recently. Of those, 541 were told that their genetic tests revealed their risk of CRC was doubled (about 1 in 20). "That's essentially the risk associated for [heart disease](#) with an elevated cholesterol level," study author David Weinberg, M.D., chairman of medicine at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, told *HealthDay*. "We made it very clear that this was only one risk factor. Whether or not that risk factor was present, everyone should get screened for CRC."

Only slightly more than a third of those at high risk got screened within

six months, a percentage that was identical to those with average risk. "It didn't make any difference, not at all," said Weinberg.

Weinberg cautioned against using the findings to come to conclusions about the impacts of genetic tests for other cancers. Still, he said, the "modest amount of available data" suggests that genetic tests like the CRC one—which don't confirm a huge increased risk of disease—don't alter health habits.

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