Colorectal Cancer Screening

The slow transition from polyp to cancer in most people provides the opportunity to prevent cancer and cancer deaths by removing polyps and early cancers. Highly sensitive screening tests such as colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy, when performed once every several years and in conjunction with less sensitive fecal occult blood test done once a year provide an appropriate screening regimen for finding these lesions. In fact, the US Preventive Services Task Force has recommended using fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy in adults beginning at the age of 50 years and continuing until age 75 years. In addition, patients with family history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps, as well as those with inflammatory bowel disease should start screening at younger ages than those with average risk.

References: