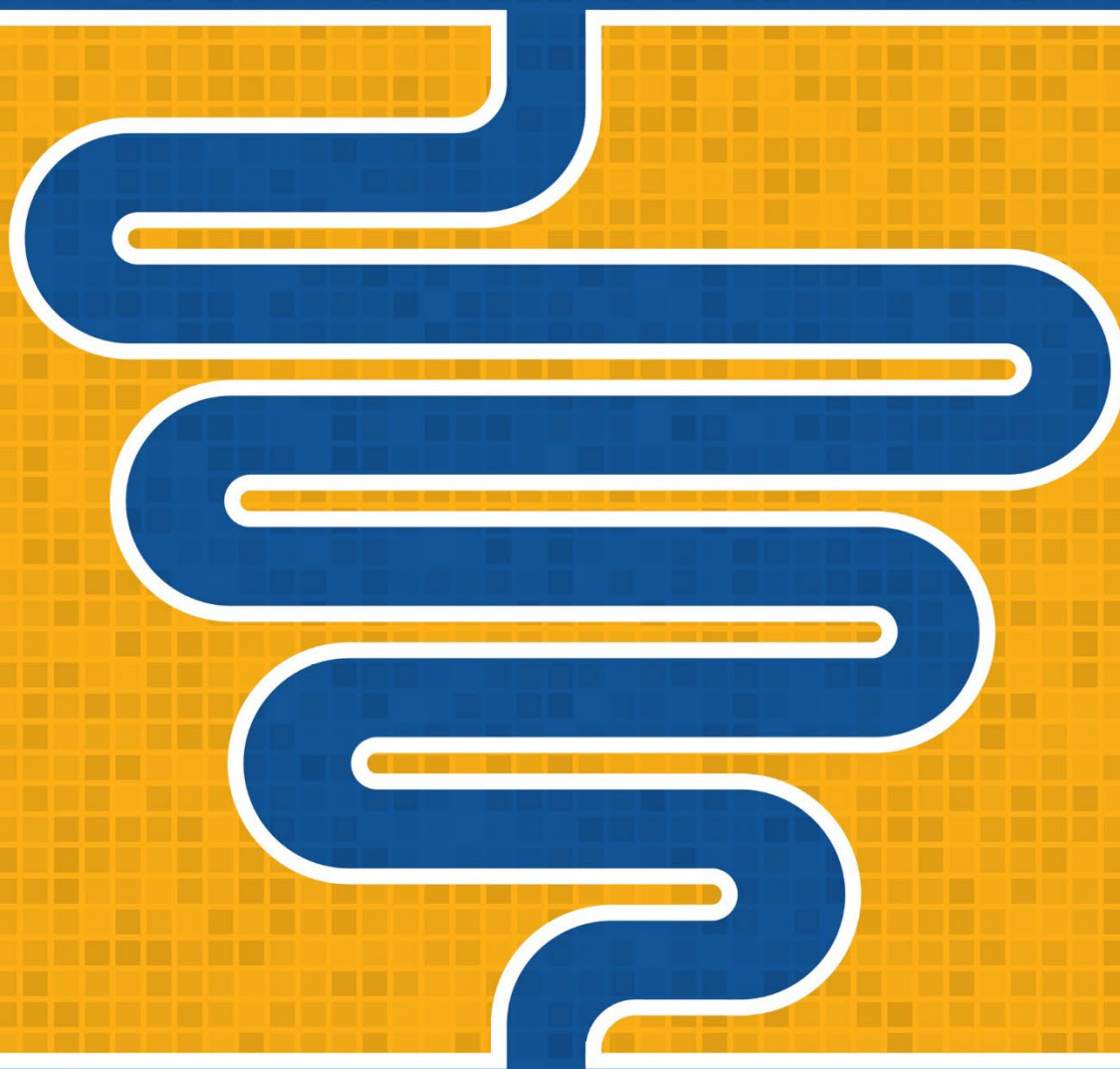


Video 6 Transcript

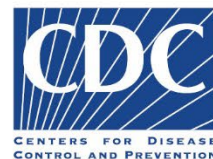
Mail FIT Kits



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VIDEO 6: MAIL FIT KITS

Narration

Hello and welcome to this video series on how to implement a mailed FIT outreach program!

My name is Samir Gupta. I am a Professor of Medicine at University of California San Diego and Staff Physician at the Jennifer Moreno VA Medical Center in San Diego. My research and clinical interests include promotion of colorectal cancer screening completion and I have completed multiple randomized trials studying the utility of mailed FIT outreach for screening.

The previous video gave you tips on how you could use letters, postcards, phone calls, and text messages to prepare your FIT kit recipients and increase your FIT sample return rates.

This video is about Step 3 of 6 in the **execution phase** of your program workflow. It gives you tips for creating FIT kit instructions, mailing out FIT kits, and receiving samples back from your patients.



Narration

Allow about two weeks for patients to respond to your primer letters before mailing them FIT kits. After waiting two weeks for responses and undelivered letters to arrive, you can generate a new and up-to-date list of patients to receive mailed FIT kits.

The list of patients to receive kits may exclude:

- Patients who had invalid addresses.
- Patients who declined to participate.
- Patients who reported prior colorectal cancer screening.

Depending on your program design, patients might mail their completed samples to the clinic, mail them to a lab, or return them in person.



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Make sure that you check the FIT kit expiry dates before sending them out. Consider mailing kits out at least six months before they expire.

It's important to document and track all mailing activities, which can be done either in your Electronic Health Record system or by using a manual staff workflow.

Here are five key steps for mailing out FIT kits:

1. When using your EHR system, generate a test vial label that shows the patient's medical record number and date of birth.
2. Include a FIT kit instruction sheet - perhaps using wordless instructions - that is suitable for your patients. If a lab requisition is required, include it in the kit.
3. Cross-check the patient's mailing address on the mailing label, the test vial label, and the lab requisition form.
4. Ensure that return envelopes are properly prepared with return addresses. If your program requires in-person returns, indicate this requirement with a visible sticker on the envelope.
5. Attach proper postage and mail out the FIT kit.



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Despite your best efforts to use only valid mailing addresses, the post office may return some FIT kits because of invalid mailing addresses.

In such cases, document the returns in your Electronic Health Record system.

- Mark the affected patient records and addresses as invalid or out-of-date.
- Exclude the affected patients from future mailings until their addresses have been updated.

After you have updated addresses for the affected patients, you can include them in future mailings, place a new lab order for them, and resend new FIT kits to their updated addresses.



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Each FIT kit should include instructions to tell patients how to complete the FIT testing process. Here are some best practices for FIT kit instructions to consider.

- Use wordless or simply-worded instructions with pictorial representations of the stool collection procedure. Wordless instructions work for almost all patients, especially for those who have trouble reading or understanding complex instructions.
- Include both written and wordless instructions in your FIT kits. Consider including instructions in multiple languages to meet the literacy needs of your patients.
- Address the challenges of collecting good stool samples and remind patients to include the collection dates on their samples to ensure successful processing at the lab.

If you customize your FIT kit instructions, emphasize the importance of recording the collection date on the test vial to ensure successful processing at the lab.

Some examples of FIT kit instructions are shown in the Mailed FIT Implementation Guide.



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FIT kits can be mailed out in large batches or in smaller batches staggered throughout the year. Here are some ideas to think about when you are designing your mailing process.

- Some clinics prefer to do one or two large mailings per year. This approach enables you to temporarily assign clinic staff to handle the workload, but it can create a large, all-at-once demand for follow-up colonoscopies.
- Other clinics that have a steady flow of screening patients throughout the year might prefer to use a staggered mailing pattern that screens smaller groups of patients at different times in the year. This approach distributes the staff workloads and colonoscopy demands throughout the year.

Keep in mind that mailing out a large batch of FIT kits might create a large, all-at-once demand for follow-up colonoscopies that could exceed your community colonoscopy capacity.

Exceeding your local colonoscopy capacity can cause difficulties because it is recommended that patients with abnormal fit tests obtain a follow-up colonoscopy as soon as possible and in no longer than six months.

Plan your mailing strategy with these considerations in mind.



Narration

Primer letters can be sent out two weeks before mailing the FIT kits or the invitation can be included in the FIT kits at the time they are mailed. There are trade-offs to consider with both approaches.

- Sending the letter and FIT kit together is advantageous because it requires only one mailing cycle instead of two cycles. Using one mailing cycle can save staff time, reduce staff costs, and reduce mailing costs. But it can also reduce the return rate of completed FIT samples because patients have less time to prepare, respond, and update their medical records.
- In contrast, sending primer letters out ahead of time requires two mailing cycles, but it can give a higher return rate, which is one of the main goals of your screening program. When patients receive a primer letter, they are alerted to the importance of colorectal cancer screening and have a chance to contact the clinic to ask questions and update their medical records.
- Be aware that savings from lower staffing and postage costs for single mailing cycles can be offset by the higher costs generated by mailing FIT kits to invalid mailing addresses and by lower return rates because unreturned FIT kits can result in financial loss.

Decision making on sending out primer letters ahead of time might consider clinic capacity, the estimated accuracy of patient addresses, anticipated return rates, and postal costs.



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Narration

Another program design option is whether to have patients return samples in person or by mail.

- Having patients return their samples in person eliminates postage costs and enables your team to update medical and insurance information before placing lab orders.
- On the other hand, in-person returns can be difficult for some patients because of their time, work, and travel barriers, especially in rural areas. These barriers can reduce your return rates.



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Finally, consider your program options for return envelopes and return postage. Here are some points to keep in mind.

- Prepaid return postage increases return rates.
- Many labs provide prepaid business reply envelopes that are addressed to the lab.
- Envelopes pre-printed with postal codes can save money because you only pay postage for returned kits. But this method requires planning and approvals from the lab and post office.
- If your clinic will be receiving the returned samples, properly address and attach postage to all outgoing reply envelopes or work with the lab or FIT vendor to provide you with business reply envelopes addressed to the clinic.
- For large mailings, prepare large quantities of business reply envelopes ahead of time.
- Branding envelopes with your clinic name and marking them as time-sensitive can encourage patients to open the kits and return their samples in a timely manner.

Work with the post office to ensure that postage rates are correct for mailed FIT kits and returns. You may be able to arrange lower costs for bulk mailings.



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Narration

Thank you for watching this video on how to customize your FIT kit mailing options!

This video was about how you could design your mailing processes to fit your budget and program goals. Several design options were described for batch and staggered mailing patterns and for methods to increase your return rates.

The next video discusses how to increase your return rates by reminding patients in a friendly way to collect their stool samples and return them in a timely manner for lab processing.

Resource Links Shown on the Slides in the Video

Mailed FIT Implementation Guide

<https://chronicdisease.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Mailed-FIT-Guide-Revised-2022.pdf>