

Colon Polyps

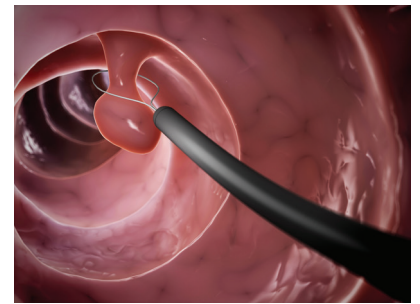
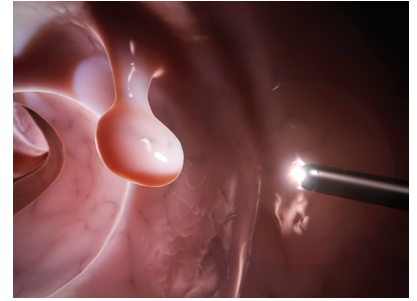
Generally, colon polyps are not cancerous. They are most common in individuals over 50 years of age. As many as 20-30% of people over 50 have, or will develop, polyps.

A polyp is a growth of tissue on the lining of the colon or rectum. Most of the time they cause NO symptoms, so you don't even know you have them. However, a few can progress to cancer, but if they are removed, then that eliminates the risk of turning into cancer.

Risk Factors

Risk factors that can influence the development of polyps include:

- Age (most polyps are found in people over 50)
- Family history, especially if a parent or sibling has/had polyps at the age of 60 or younger
- Smoking and alcohol use, especially in excess
- Obesity
- Certain gene mutations (this may run in the family)
- Ethnicity; African-Americans have a higher risk of developing polyps
- Sedentary lifestyle



Treatment

Most polyps are found as an incidental finding during a colonoscopy. Most can be removed at the same time and sent for testing. Occasionally they are too large to be removed in one setting and you may need to come back for a repeat colonoscopy or even an operation to remove it. Depending on the type of polyp, the size of the polyp(s), and the number of polyps, a repeat colonoscopy may be needed in 3, 5, or 10 years.

The two most common types of polyps are adenomatous polyps (e.g., tubular adenomas) or hyperplastic polyps. Hyperplastic polyps generally are of no concern and do not progress into cancer. Adenomatous polyps can progress into cancer and may need to be monitored more closely.



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