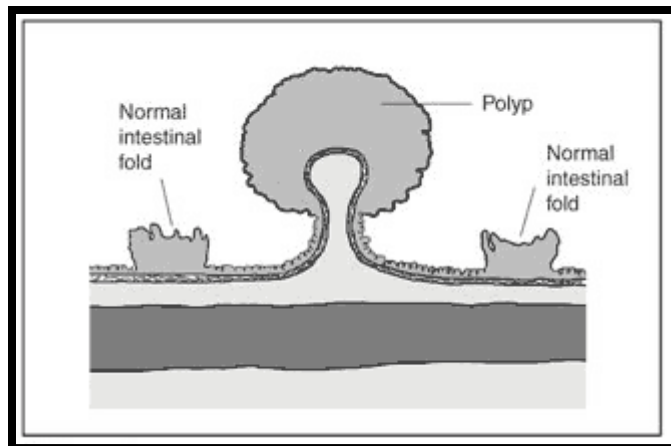


## My Doctor found a colon polyp – now what?

### What are colon polyps?

A polyp is extra tissue that grows inside your body. Colon polyps grow in the large intestine. The large intestine, also called the colon, is part of your digestive system. It's a long, hollow tube at the end of your digestive tract where your body makes and stores stool.



### polyps dangerous?

Most polyps are not dangerous. Most are benign, which means they are **not** cancer. But over time, some types of polyps can turn into cancer. To be safe, doctors remove all polyps and test them.

Who gets polyps?

Anyone can get polyps, but certain people are more likely than others. You may have a greater chance of getting polyps if

- you're over 50. The older you get, the more likely you are to develop polyps.
- you've had polyps before.
- someone in your family has had polyps.

someone in your family has had cancer of the large intestine.

### What are the symptoms?

Most small polyps don't cause symptoms. Often, people don't know they have one until the doctor finds it during a regular checkup or while testing them for something else.

But some people do have symptoms like these:

rectal bleeding.

constipation or diarrhea that lasts more than a week.

blood in the stool. Blood can make stool look black, or it can show up as red streaks in the stool.

If you have any of these symptoms, see a doctor to find out what the problem is.

Colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy testing



## My Doctor found a colon polyp – now what?

### Who should get tested for polyps?

Talk to your doctor about getting tested for polyps if

- have symptoms
- you're 50 years old or older
- ***someone in your family has had polyps or colon cancer***

### How are polyps treated?

The doctor will remove the polyp. Sometimes, the doctor takes it out during sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy. Or the doctor may decide to operate through the abdomen. The polyp is then tested for cancer. If you've had polyps, you will need to get tested regularly

### How can I prevent polyps?

Doctors don't know of any one sure way to prevent polyps

### What are the types of colon polyps?

There are basically 4 types of polyps that commonly occur within the colon:

1. Inflammatory - they are not true polyps, but just a reaction to chronic inflammation of the colon wall. They are not the type that turns to cancer. They are usually biopsied to verify type.
2. Hyperplastic - A common type of benign polyp. They are considered to be low risk for cancer.
3. Tubular adenoma or adenomatous polyp - This is the most common type of polyp and the one referred to most often when a doctor speaks of colon polyps. About 70% of polyps removed are of this type. Adenomas carry a definite cancer risk which rises as the polyp grows larger. Adenomatous polyps usually cause no symptoms, but if detected early they can be removed during colonoscopy before any cancer cells form. The good news is that polyps grow slowly and may take years to turn into cancer. Patients with a history of adenomatous polyps must be periodically reexamined.
4. Villous adenoma or tubulovillous adenoma- About 15% of polyps removed are of this type. This is a much more serious type of polyp that has a very high cancer risk as it grows larger. Often they are larger. Smaller ones can be removed in piecemeal fashion - sometimes over several colonoscopies. Larger villous adenomas may require surgery for complete removal. Follow up depends on size and completeness of removal.