

Colon Polyps

This handout explains colon polyps and what you can expect if one is found during your colonoscopy.

Polyps

Polyps are small growths of tissue that can be seen during a colonoscopy. Finding a polyp is common.

Most polyps are benign (non-cancerous) and can grow without causing any symptoms. Some polyps have an area of cancer or may develop into cancer later, this is why they are removed. Colon cancer almost always begins as a colon polyp. Polyps can slowly change into cancer, which is why most patients are told to have a colonoscopy at least every 10 years.

Risk Factors

- Over the age of 50
- Family history of polyps or colon cancer
- Your history of polyps
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- Lack of exercise
- Being overweight
- High fat diet (lots of fatty foods, red meats or processed meats)

Polyp Removal

Most polyps can be fully and safely removed during your colonoscopy. You will not feel any pain. The polyp will be sent to the lab for testing. Your results will be sent to your MyChart and your doctor at the same time. Once we review the results, we will contact you by letter, phone or MyChart. If you do not hear from us within 2 weeks, call **608-890-5000**.

There are many types of polyps. The type of polyp(s) that you have helps your doctor decide when you will need your next colonoscopy. Your next test will be scheduled, based on:

- The type of the polyp.
- The number and size of the polyps.

Common Kinds of Polyps

- **Hyperplastic**
These polyps are often found in the end of the colon. They are often small and do not have a risk of turning into cancer. These may be removed and sent for testing.
- **Adenoma**
These polyps could turn into cancer. They are further studied based on size and how they look under a microscope.
- **Sessile Serrated**
These polyps are flat and could turn into cancer. They are further studied based on size and how they look under a microscope.

Your doctor cannot be certain of the type of polyp just by how it looks, so taking it out is advised.