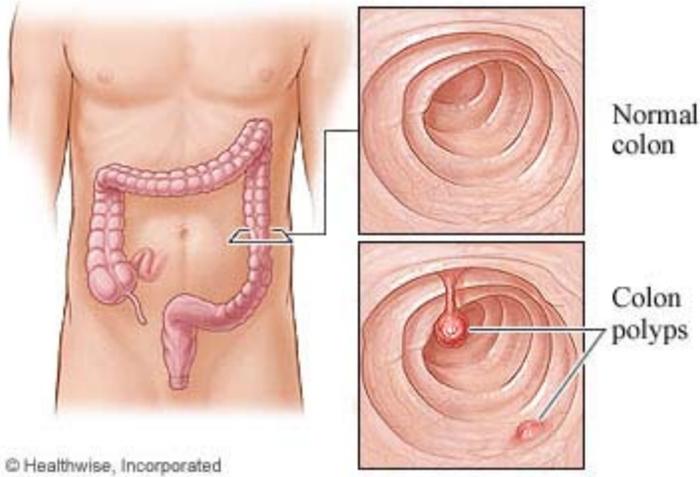


Colon Polyps: After Your Visit

Your Care Instructions



Colon polyps are growths in the colon or the rectum. The cause of most colon polyps is not known, and most people who get them do not have any problems. But a certain kind can turn into cancer. For this reason, regular testing for colon polyps is important for people age 50 and older and anyone who has an increased risk for colon cancer.

Polyps are usually found through routine colon cancer screening tests. Although most colon polyps are not cancerous, they are usually removed and then tested for cancer. Screening for colon cancer saves lives because the cancer can usually be cured if it is caught early.

If you have a polyp that is the type that can turn into cancer, you may need more tests to examine your entire colon. The doctor will remove any other polyps that he or she finds, and you will be tested more often.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Regular exams to look for colon polyps are the best way to prevent polyps from turning into colon cancer. These can include a test for blood in the stool (fecal occult blood test), colonoscopy, and sigmoidoscopy. Talk with your doctor about a testing schedule that is right for you.

To prevent polyps

There is no home treatment for colon polyps. But you can take steps to prevent them from forming.

- Get regular exercise and stay at a healthy body weight. Exercise can lower your chance of getting colon cancer. Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Walking is a good choice. You also may want to do other activities, such as running, swimming, cycling, or playing tennis or team sports.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women. Too much alcohol can cause health problems.

- Do not smoke. Smoking can raise your risk of getting colon polyps. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and limit animal fat in your diet.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have severe belly pain.
- Your stools are maroon or very bloody.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have a fever.
- You have nausea or vomiting.
- You have a change in bowel habits (new constipation or diarrhea).
- Your symptoms get worse or are not improving as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to www.southdenvergi.com, log into the web portal, and enter C571 in the search box to learn more about Colon Polyps: After Your Visit.

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