



Colon Polyps

A **polyp** is extra tissue that grows inside your body. Colon polyps grow in the **large intestine**. 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. Usually, polyps that are smaller than a pea aren't harmful. But larger polyps could someday become cancer or may already be 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.

You may also be more likely to get polyps if you

- eat a lot of fatty foods
- smoke
- drink alcohol
- don't exercise
- weigh too much

Who should get tested for polyps?

Talk to your doctor about getting tested for polyps if

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

Points to Remember

- A polyp is extra tissue that grows inside the body. Most polyps are not harmful.
- Symptoms may include constipation or diarrhea for more than a week or blood on your underwear, on toilet paper, or in your stool.
- Many polyps do not cause symptoms.
- Doctors remove all polyps and test them for cancer.
- Talk to your doctor about getting tested for polyps if
 - you have any symptoms
 - you're 50 years old or older
 - someone in your family has had polyps or colon cancer