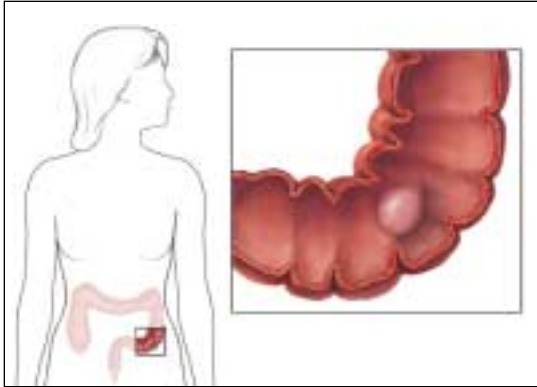


Background information

Adenomatous Polyps



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Adenomatous polyps (adenomas) of the colon and rectum are benign (noncancerous) growths that may be precursor lesions to colorectal cancer. Polyps greater than one centimeter in diameter associated with a greater risk of cancer. If polyps are not removed, they continue to grow and can become cancerous.

Colorectal polyps are common and may be found in approximately nine of every

10,000 persons. Patients may have more than one polyp, and the risk of having polyps increases with age. The chance of having polyps is also increased in patients with a family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, including inherited disorders such as Gardner's syndrome or familial adenomatous polyposis.

Adenomas typically cause few symptoms; however, painless rectal bleeding is the most common. There is no known way to prevent polyps, but they are easily removed by colonoscopy, which typically eliminates the risk of cancer. The surgical pathologist establishes the diagnosis of adenoma by microscopic examination of a biopsy specimen and determines whether the tissue also contains a cancer or other disease. This knowledge is essential in determining if further treatment is necessary and, if so, what kind will be most successful.

Treatment options for adenomas

Colonoscopy A colonoscopy may be performed in an outpatient surgical facility. Through the use of a colonoscope, a physician can view the colon and remove individual polyps via a biopsy. This simple procedure is relatively painless. Some large polyps may require surgical removal.

Follow-up Colonoscopy Additional colonoscopies will be necessary to monitor your condition and assure that new polyps have not developed. It is critical that you continue to monitor your condition in order to assure proper treatment and reduce your risk of cancer.

Measures you can take to prevent colorectal cancer

- Monitor your bowel habits. Consult your physician if you experience any of the following:
 - Changes in routine bowel movements
 - Abdominal cramps
 - Unexplained weight loss
 - Blood in your stool
- Maintain a high-fiber diet that is low in fat and calories. Consult your physician for proper diet and nutrition information.
- Certain drugs, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and dietary supplements, e.g., calcium, may reduce the risk of developing polyps.

Important questions to ask your doctor

- Do you recommend the removal of my polyp(s)?
- Does my polyp put me at increased risk for colorectal cancer?
- What can I do to take care of myself during and after treatment?
- To whom may I turn to for nutritional and dietary information?
- Are there any other measures I can take to reduce my risk of future polyps?

Sources for additional information

American College of Gastroenterology 703/820-7400 • www.acg.gi.org
Patient education brochures, current clinical updates and late-breaking news

American Gastroenterological Association 301/654-2055
www.gastro.org/public/digestinfo/html
Access to expert panels, support groups and detailed diagnostic and treatment information

Pharmaceutical Information Network www.pharminfo.com/disease/gastro/html
Access to articles, research news and discussion groups on many gastrointestinal disorders



Associated Pathology Medical Group, Inc.

www.apmglab.com or 800-848-2764