

COLORECTAL CANCER:

You Can Prevent It

PHYSICIANS FROM THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GASTROENTEROLOGY want you to know that **screening colonoscopy** can find growths in the colon (called polyps) so they can be removed before they turn into **colorectal cancer**.

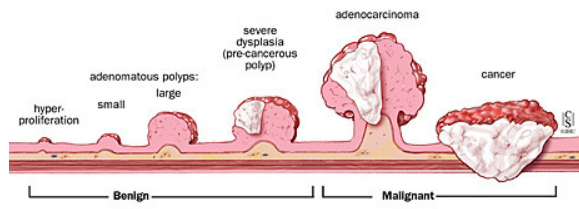
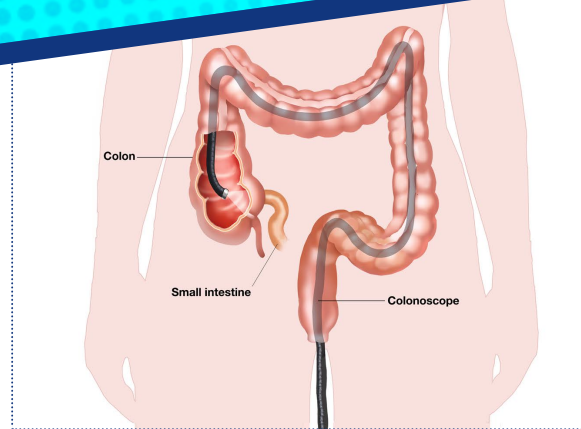


Figure 1. Progression from colorectal polyp to cancer. Not all polyps become cancer, but all cancer starts from a polyp. Image: Thrumurthy *et al.*, *BMJ*, 2016

About COLON POLYPS

- A polyp is a small clump of cells on the lining of the colon. Most colon polyps are harmless. If left inside, some colon polyps can continue to grow into colorectal cancer, which is often fatal when found in later stages.
- Not all colon polyps turn into colorectal cancer, but most colorectal cancers start as colon polyps.
- Because colon polyps do not usually cause symptoms, it is important to have regular colorectal cancer screenings such as colonoscopy.
- Remember: colonoscopy is the only colorectal cancer screening test in which polyps can be removed during the same procedure. Polyp removal can prevent colorectal cancer before it can form.



45 IS THE NEW 50

AGE 45 is now the **recommended age to start screening for colorectal cancer** among average risk adults, according to the American College of Gastroenterology.

An Important CHANGE

- This is an important change from earlier guidelines that recommended starting at age 50 for most people and age 45 for African Americans. Now, “45 is the new 50” to start screening for **everyone** at average risk for colorectal cancer.

Never Ignore NEW OR WORRYING SYMPTOMS

- Reach out to your health care providers if you have any new or worrying symptoms, regardless of your age. This includes blood in the stool, a change in bowel habits, rectal or abdominal pain, unexpected weight loss, or unexplained or new anemia.



Learn about your screening options for colorectal cancer: gi.org/coloncancer



Find a gastroenterologist near you: gi.org/findagi

