

Colonic Polyps

What Are Colonic Polyps?

Colonic polyps are small growths that form on the inner lining of your large intestine (colon) or rectum. They can vary in shape, appearing as slight bulges (sessile) or on stalks (pedunculated). While common and often harmless, some polyps have the potential to develop into bowel cancer over time.

Causes And Risk Factors

The exact cause of colonic polyps is not fully understood, but certain factors can increase your risk:

- **Age:** Individuals over 50 are more susceptible
- **Family history:** A family history of polyps or bowel cancer increases risk
- **Lifestyle factors:** High-fat diets, smoking, alcohol consumption, lack of exercise, and being overweight are contributing factors
- **Medical conditions** - Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis) and inherited conditions like familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) and Lynch syndrome can increase the likelihood of developing polyps

Symptoms Of Colonic Polyps

Most polyps do not cause symptoms, but when they do, they may include:

- **Blood in the stool** - May appear as red streaks or make stool look black
- **Changes in bowel habits** - Persistent diarrhoea or constipation lasting more than a week
- **Mucus in the stool** and **abdominal discomfort**
- **Unexplained weight loss**

If you experience these symptoms, speak to your doctor for further investigation.

How Are Colonic Polyps Diagnosed?

Your doctor may recommend one or more of the following tests:

- **Colonoscopy** – A thin, flexible tube with a camera examines the entire colon. Polyps can be removed during the procedure
- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy** – Similar to a colonoscopy but examines only the lower part of the colon
- **CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy)** – A CT scan creates images of the bowel
- **Stool test (Faecal immunochemical test - FIT)** – Detects hidden blood in the stool, which may indicate polyps or bowel cancer. If positive, a colonoscopy is usually required

Are Colonic Polyps Cancerous?

Most polyps are benign, but some can become cancerous if left untreated. Flat polyps are harder to detect and more likely to be cancerous than raised ones. Regular screening and early removal reduce the risk of bowel cancer.

Treatment Of Colonic Polyps

Most colonic polyps can be removed during a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy. The removed polyps are then analysed to determine if they are benign or have the potential to become cancerous. In rare cases, if polyps are large or numerous, surgery may be necessary to remove a portion of the bowel. If you have had polyps before, your doctor may recommend regular follow-up screenings.

Prevention And Monitoring

You may reduce your risk of developing polyps by:

- **Eating a high-fibre diet** rich in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains
- **Reducing fat and processed foods** in your diet

- **Maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption**

Regular screening is crucial, especially if you're over 50 or have risk factors. Early detection and removal of polyps can prevent the development of bowel cancer.

Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- **Expertise:** Our team includes specialists with extensive experience in diagnosing and treating colonic polyps
- **Advanced technology:** We utilise state-of-the-art equipment for accurate diagnosis and effective treatment
- **Personalised care:** We provide tailored treatment plans to meet your individual health needs

Contact Us

If you have concerns about colonic polyps or need advice on screening and treatment options, please reach out to us. Our dedicated team is here to provide you with expert care and support for your digestive of Form