



# Colonic Polyps

## **What are colonic polyps?**

Colonic polyps are small growths of tissue on the inside lining of the large intestine. They are a common abnormality found during a colonoscopy.

Colonic polyps can be found anywhere along the length of the colon from the rectum to the caecum.

## **What are the symptoms of colonic polyps?**

Colonic polyps often cause no symptoms and are only found during investigation. Occasionally polyps result in bleeding, pain and the passing of mucus with bowel motions.

## **How are colonic polyps diagnosed?**

Colonoscopy is the investigation of choice. If polyps are diagnosed by barium enema x-ray or CT scanning, a colonoscopy is still required to biopsy and remove them.

## **How are colonic polyps treated?**

During colonoscopy an instrument can be inserted through the colonoscope to obtain a biopsy or tissue sample for laboratory analysis.

This instrument can also be inserted to cauterise the polyp and the tiny vessels supplying it with blood and as a result the polyp can then be removed.

There is no sensation inside the colon so when the tissue is removed you will not feel it. Most polyps can be removed safely this way but very large polyps may need to be taken out surgically.

## **Are colonic polyps dangerous?**

There are two main types of polyps in the bowel one of which is of no long term significance. However, the other more common polyps are benign tumours called adenomas and if left they have the potential to grow and turn malignant i.e. into a bowel cancer. It is therefore important to detect and remove adenomas. Removal of polyps have been shown to prevent the subsequent development of bowel cancer.

## **Do colonic polyps run in families?**

The short answer is yes, but not always. However a family history of polyps or bowel cancer is significant.

## **What should I do if someone in my family has had colonic polyps?**

If members of your family have a history of colonic polyps or bowel cancer then it is important to consider a screening colonoscopy. Removing polyps is the best way of preventing bowel cancer.

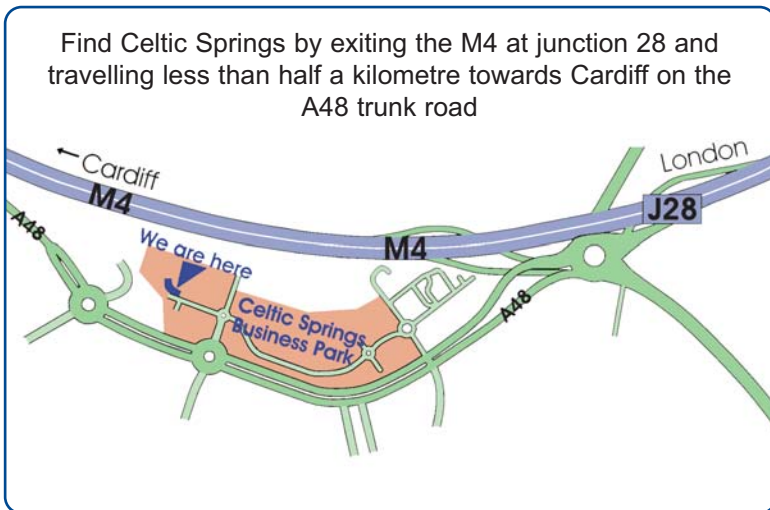
When to start undergoing colonoscopy and how often it should be performed are matters to discuss with your doctor. As a general rule most colonoscopic screening starts at age 45-50 years and may need repeating every 3-5 years.

There is much debate on the subject of screening at present. Certainly there is an argument for colonoscopic screening even those without a family history, because of the very high incidence of bowel cancer in the UK.

For further information contact:  
[www.corecharity.org.uk](http://www.corecharity.org.uk)

This fact sheet was designed to help you. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions of our specialists and nurses.

If you have any problems following your procedure call Nucleus Healthcare during opening hours  
08:00 hrs. — 18:00 hrs.



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