

### What are polyps?

Polyps of the colon and rectum, referred to as colorectal polyps, are abnormal growths that involve the lining of the colon and grow within (or into the tube) of the colon. Most polyps are benign (not cancerous/non malignant) and categorized as either hyperplastic, sessile serrated, or adenomatous polyps. Hyperplastic polyps have no chance of becoming cancerous but sessile serrated and adenomatous polyps are considered pre-cancerous.

**Note:** Unless otherwise stated in your letter, your polyps have been removed.

### Size

Polyps vary in size from less than a millimeter to several centimeters. Although cancer risk may increase with the size of the polyp, there is no specific, general size that indicates a polyp is becoming cancerous.

### What causes polyps?

The biggest risk factor for developing polyps is being older than 50. A family history of colon polyps or colon cancer increases the risk of polyps. Also, people with a personal history of polyps or colon cancer are at higher risk of developing polyps in the future than a person who has never had a polyp. In addition, there are some rare “syndromes” that run in families that increase the risk of forming polyps and cancers, even at younger ages. Certain lifestyle factors (obesity, tobacco and alcohol use, eating processed foods, etc.) may also increase your risk for developing polyps and colorectal cancer.

### Shape

They grow in several shapes: flat, sessile (base of the polyp equal to its width), stalk (pedunculated), or a combination (e.g. flat-elevated).

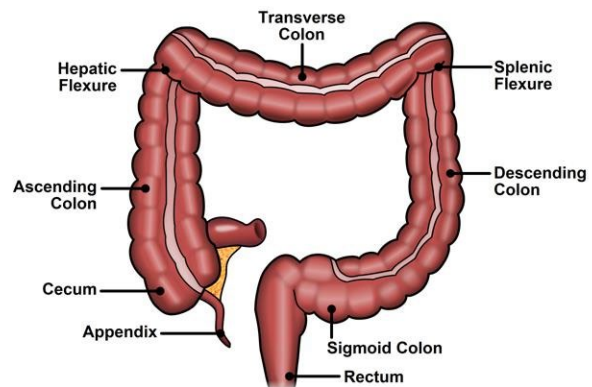
- Larger serrated polyps, which are typically flat and may be covered by a layer of mucous, are difficult to detect and are located in the proximal/right side of the colon. These are considered precancerous.
- Small, serrated polyps in the lower colon, also known as hyperplastic polyps, are rarely malignant.

### Location

The **cecum** is the beginning of the colon, where the small intestine empties into the large intestine.

The **ascending colon, transverse colon, descending colon, and sigmoid colon** are other parts of the colon after the cecum.

The colon ends at the **rectum**, where waste is stored until it exits through the anus.



### Adenomas

Adenomatous polyps are considered **pre-cancerous**. There are three types of adenomas:

- Tubular adenoma
- Tubulovillous adenoma
- Villous adenoma

### Dysplasia

**Dysplasia** describes how histologically advanced a polyp is, and all adenomas are dysplastic. Pathologists use the term “high-grade dysplasia” to distinguish polyps with more advanced histology. **Colon cancer**, by definition, is when dysplastic elements of a polyp/growth have invaded deep enough (i.e. submucosa layer) into the colon wall.

### How was my recall date determined?

The timing of your next colonoscopy is determined by several factors, including the type, number, and size of polyps removed and/or the quality of your bowel preparation.