

## **Colon Cancer**

Colon cancer often occurs in older adults but may occur in any age group. Cancer can form from many sources but often develop from polyps. Polyps are groups of small cells that are typically begin as benign and later grow into cancer. It is important to follow recommendations of colon screening (colonoscopy). Typically, it is recommended to start this screening at age 50. However, if you have underlying conditions or a strong family history of colon cancer it may be recommended to begin at an earlier time.

### **Reasons to get a colonoscopy:**

- Abdominal cramping and/or pain
- Changes in bowel habits (diarrhea or constipation)
- Changes in weight
- Distension and failure to completely empty bowels
- Unexplained weakness and/or fatigue
- Bleeding (rectal or presence in stool)

It is important to understand that some patients may be asymptomatic. This means that they will not have symptoms of cancer and may not know that they have. Colon screening is important to help prevent cancer by removing polyps or catch cancer early for a strong prognosis.

### **Prevention**

- Healthy diet
  - Eat a nutritionally balanced diet blended with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise appropriately
- Limit alcohol intake
  - One drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men
- Stop and refrain from smoking

### **Diagnosis**

Colonoscopies are performed by utilizing a camera/scope through the rectum to view the inside of the colon. If polyps or other suspicious conditions are found, the provider can take a biopsy and send it to a lab for pathological review.

### **Treatment**

Treatment is directed by the type of disease diagnosed. Surgery, medications, and lifestyle changes are some examples of treatment. We can help direct your care!