



Bowel Polyps

As part of your procedure today you have had a polypectomy.

What are Polyps?

A bowel or, colonic polyp, is an abnormal tissue growth situated on the inner wall of the large bowel (colon or rectum). Almost half of all Australians are likely to develop polyps, but the majority are asymptomatic. Most polyps are harmless, but left untreated some may develop into bowel cancer.

Polyp types

Polyps come in various shapes and sizes and are found in different areas of the bowel. They are classified as adenomatous, hyperplastic or serrated. Adenomatous polyps are also known as adenomas and can over time, develop into bowel cancer. Hyperplastic polyps are generally not at risk of developing into bowel cancer, unless they occur in patients who have a rare type of syndrome of hyperplastic polyposis.

Following your polyp removal (polypectomy)

A polypectomy is a safe and effective technique for the removal of polyps however as with all medical procedures there are associated small risks. Examples are bleeding from the polyp site and bowel perforation (making a small hole in the wall of the bowel).

If you experience any of the following please seek urgent medical attention:

- Any signs of infection, including fever and chills
- A large amount of bleeding,
- Black tary stools
- Uncontrolled abdominal pain,
- A hard, swollen abdomen or the inability to pass flatus/gas or a bowel motion,
- A cough, shortness of breath or chest pain,
- Severe nausea or vomiting

Not all polyps are able to be retrieved after they are cut off but any polyps retrieved will be sent for pathology testing. It is important you follow up with your GP to discuss these results.

How can I prevent polyps in the future?

Regular colonoscopies and the National Bowel Screening Program are the best surveillance options for monitoring the bowel for any presence of polyps and bowel cancer. Healthy lifestyle, a balanced diet, not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight and participating in regular exercise is also important.