



COLON *Cancer* 101

Bringing Education And Understanding To You

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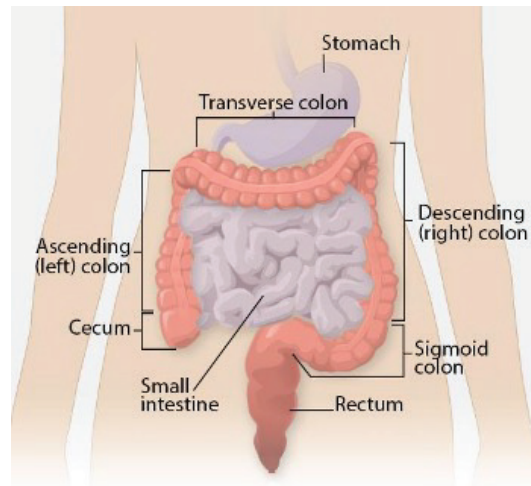
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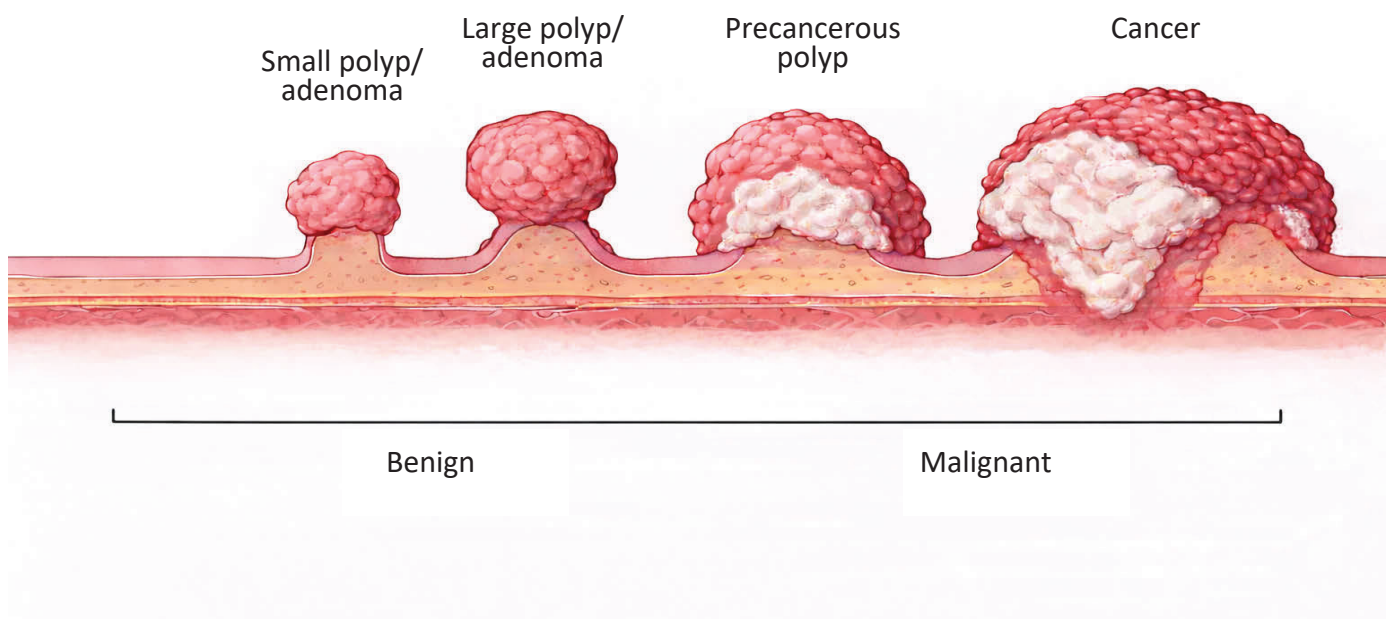
I What is colorectal cancer?

- **Colorectal cancer** occurs when cells in the large intestine grow out of control and start changing in an abnormal way.^{1,2}



- The **large intestine** includes the cecum, colon, and rectum.
- All colorectal cancers start with small abnormal growths called **polyps**.^{1,2}

Polyps can occur in up to 30-40% of the adult population but only some grow to become cancers



References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Colorectal Cancer: What Is Colorectal Cancer? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Oct 18]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/what-is-colorectal-cancer.htm
2. American Cancer Society. Colorectal Cancer: What Is Colorectal Cancer? [Internet]. 2020 [cited on 2022 Oct 18]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/what-is-colorectal-cancer.html>

| How common is colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is the number

1

most common cancer among men in Malaysia, and the number

2

most common cancer among women in Malaysia.³

About **7** out of **10**



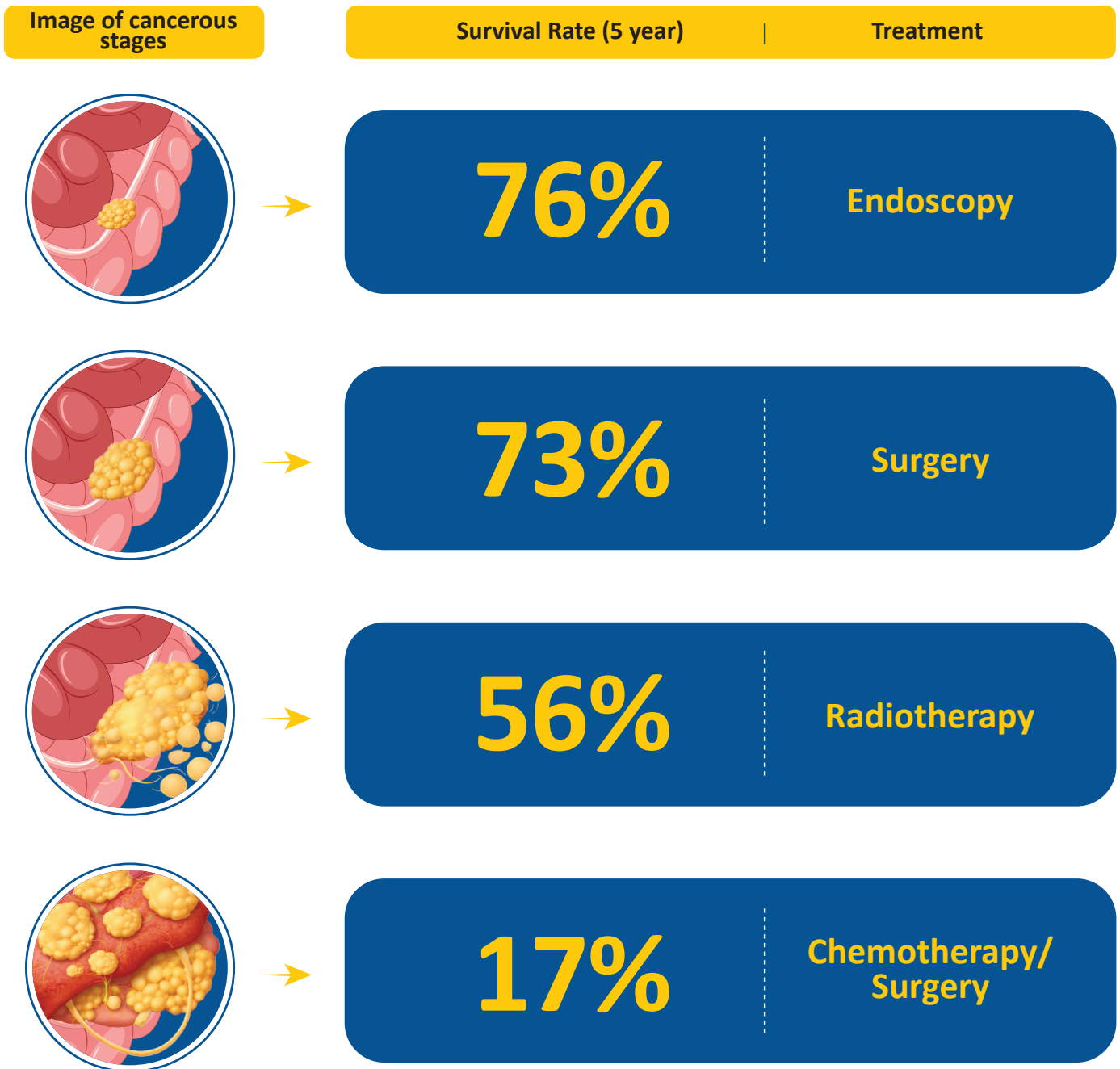
colorectal cancer cases in Malaysia were **diagnosed late in stage 3 and stage 4** between 2012 and 2016, making it difficult for effective treatment.³

References:

3. Azizah A, Hashimah B, Nirmal K, Siti Zubaidah A, Puteri N, Nabihah A et al. Malaysia National Cancer Registry Report (MNCR) 2012-2016. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2019.

| How common is colorectal cancer?

People whose colorectal cancer are detected in



*The percentage of patients who are alive 5 years after diagnosis.

The sooner the cancer is detected, the higher your chances of survival and the less aggressive the treatments will be

References:

4. National Cancer Registry, National Cancer Institute, Ministry of Health Malaysia (2018). Malaysian Study on Cancer Survival (MySCan).

Who is at risk of colorectal cancer?



References:

5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Colorectal Cancer: What Are the Risk Factors? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Oct 18]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/risk_factors.htm

I How do I find out if I have colorectal cancer?

Signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer⁶



Change in bowel habits such as diarrhoea, constipation, or narrowing of the stool that last longer than a few days



Sense of needing to go to the toilet yet not feeling relieved by doing so



Continuous and unexplained tiredness



Pain or cramping in the abdomen



Blood in stool



Unexplained weight loss

The difference between signs and symptoms:

Signs are what others see (e.g. swelling and bleeding),
symptoms are what you feel (e.g. headache and pain).⁷

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE CHANGES

References:

6. American Cancer Society. Do I Have Colorectal Cancer? Signs, Symptoms and Work-Up [Internet]. 2021 [cited on 2022 Oct 23]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/signs-and-symptoms-of-colon-cancer.html>

7. American Cancer Society. Signs and Symptoms of Cancer [Internet]. 2020 Nov 6 [cited on 2022 Dec 28]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/understanding-your-diagnosis/signs-and-symptoms-of-cancer.html>

I How do I find out if I have colorectal cancer? (continued)

- In Malaysia, colorectal cancer screening is **recommended** for people **aged 50 to 75 to detect colorectal cancer early.**⁸
- The purpose of **screening is to look for cancer** even before symptoms appear.
- If any of your **close family member(s) (parents, siblings or children) has a history of colorectal cancer,** screening is recommended for the entire family.



References:

8. Quick Reference for Healthcare Providers. Management of Colorectal Carcinoma. Putrajaya [MY]. Ministry of Health Malaysia. 8 p. Report No: 1

I How do I find out if I have colorectal cancer? (continued)

- Colorectal cancer can be detected early using the tests listed below.⁹ These tests, through different techniques, look for abnormal changes.

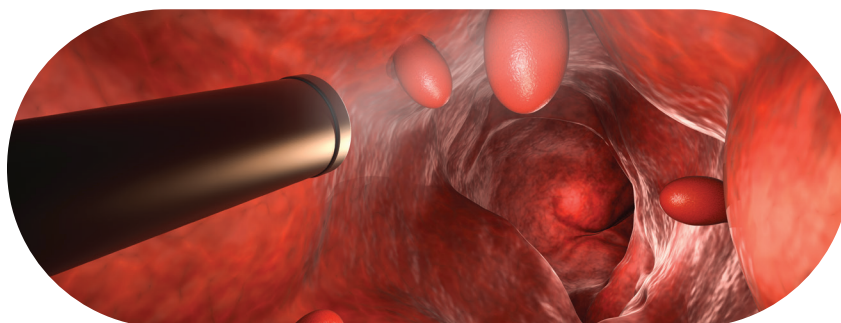


Immunochemical Faecal Occult Blood Test (iFOBT)

This test checks for blood in your stool.

A positive test result shows that blood is present in your stool, which could be caused by haemorrhoids, polyps, or colorectal cancer.

50 and above: once every year¹⁰



Colonoscopy

This procedure scans the entire colon as well as rectum for the presence of polyps or cancer. Your doctor may remove polyps or other tissues for further examination during this procedure.

40 and above (if you have a family history of colorectal cancer): repeat as recommended by your doctor¹⁰

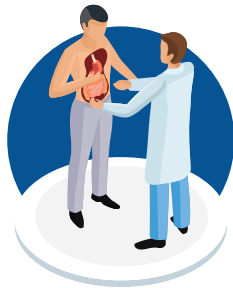
BASED ON THE RESULTS, THE DOCTOR WILL ADVISE ON NEXT STEPS

References:

9. Cancer.net. Colorectal Cancer: Screening [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Oct 23]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/colorectal-cancer/screening#>

10. Malaysia Health Technology Assessment Section (MaHTAS). Clinical Practice Guidelines: Management of Colorectal Carcinoma. Ministry of Health Malaysia 2017 MOH/P/PAK/352.17 (GU)

I How do I protect myself from colorectal cancer?



Go for a colonoscopy

Finding polyps before they turn cancerous.¹¹



Don't smoke

Avoid active and passive smoking completely.¹¹



Practise a balanced diet

Eat more healthily.¹¹
(refer to next page)



Limit alcohol intake¹¹



Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight

You can manage your weight by getting more exercise and being physically active.¹¹
(refer to next page)

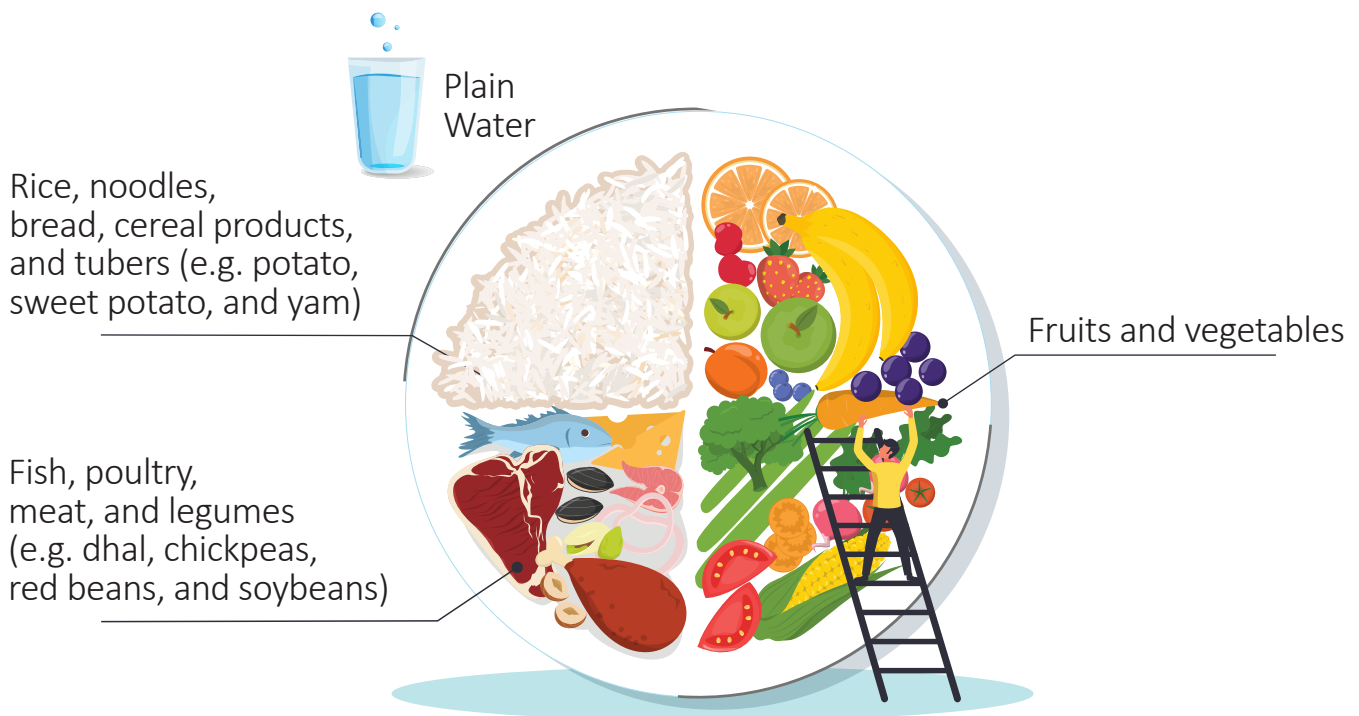
References:

11. American Cancer Society. Six Ways to Lower Your Risk for Colorectal Cancer [Internet]. 2021 [cited on 2022 Oct 23]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/six-ways-to-lower-your-risk-for-colon-cancer.html>







I How do I protect myself from cancer in general?

Eat Healthy

The diagram below shows the **Malaysian Healthy Plate with Quarter Quarter Half concept**. Use this as a visual guide to healthy, balanced meals.¹²



Recommendation for the following food products:

	Red meat	Less than 500g/week = 3 palm sizes of meat in total ¹³		2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables daily¹³	E.g., eat 1 apple + 1 slice watermelon + 12 tablespoons of cooked leafy vegetables/day
	Processed meat	Avoid completely ¹³		Sugar sweetened drinks	Avoid completely ¹³
	More than 2 servings of wholegrain daily¹³	E.g., eat at least 2 slices brown bread + 0.5 cup cooked brown rice/day		Processed foods	Less than once a week or avoid completely ¹³

References:

12. Panduan Pinggan Sihat Malaysia. Putrajaya (MY). Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2016. 50 p. Report No.: 1.

13. World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. "Continuous Update Project Expert Report 2018.

Recommendations and public health and policy implications." [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: dietandcancerreport.org

| How do I protect myself from cancer in general? (continued)

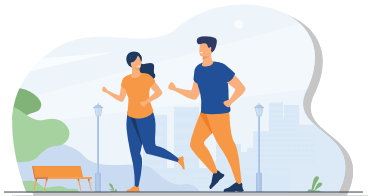
Be Active



150 Minutes
Moderate-intensity* aerobic activity per week¹⁴

Brisk walking, jogging, swimming, tennis (doubles), cycling, hiking, line dancing

or



75 Minutes
Vigorous-intensity** aerobic activity per week¹⁴

Running, swimming laps, tennis (singles), jumping rope, aerobic dance, kickboxing

and



At least 2 days
of muscle strengthening activities per week¹⁴

Use of exercise bands, weight machines, or hand-held weights; push-ups, pull-ups, planks, squats, lunges, some yoga postures and tai chi

How do you measure intensity?

Use the 'talk test'

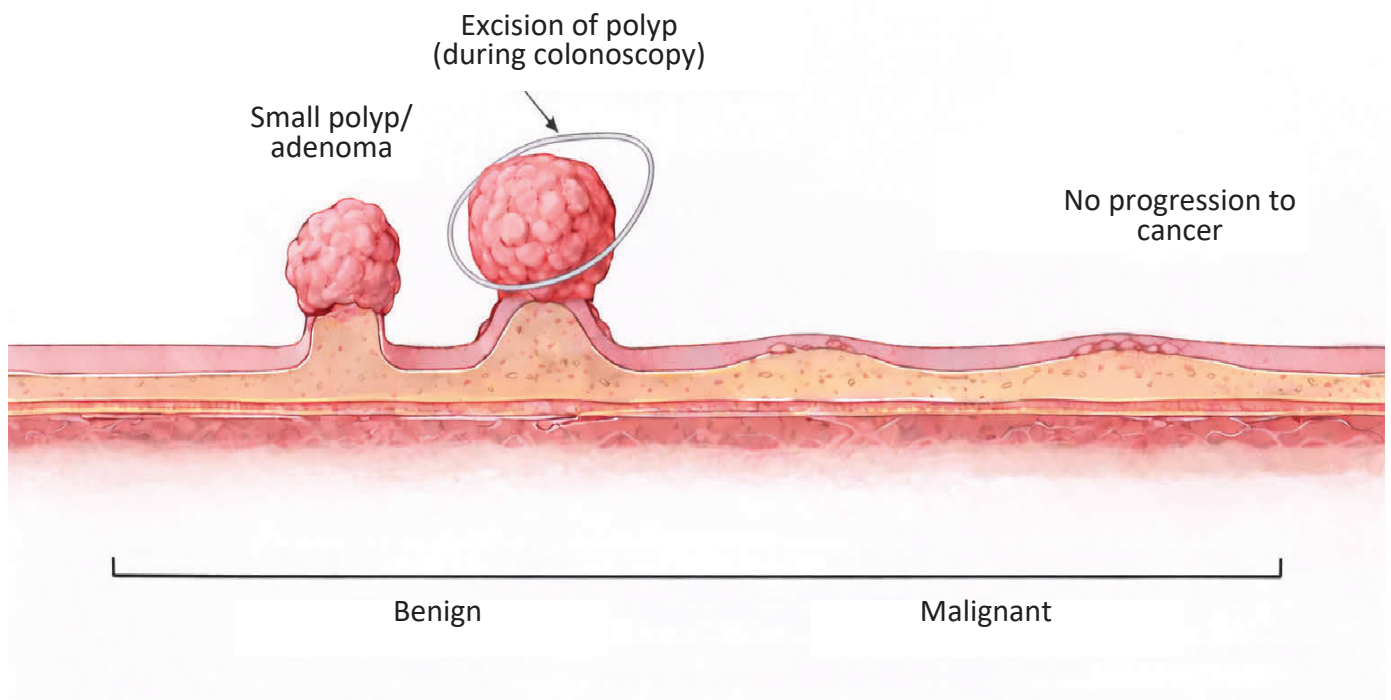
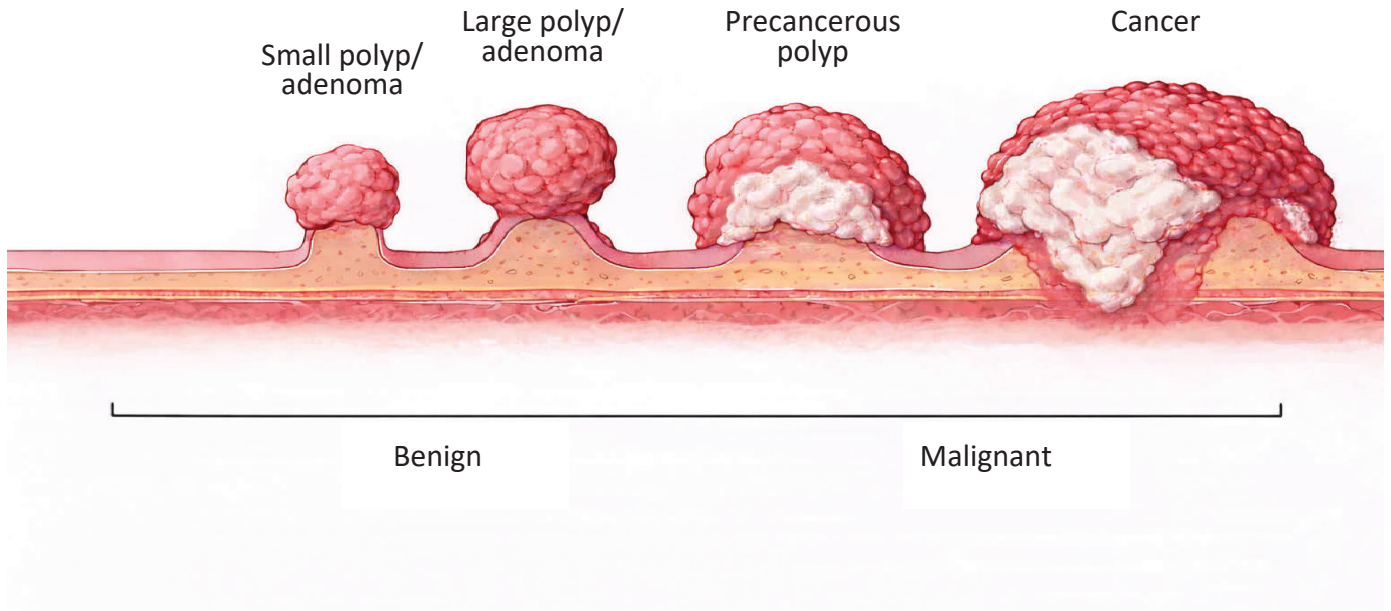
<p>*Moderate-intensity exercise</p>	<p>Moderate effort required. You breathe harder, you start to sweat, and you will talk more slowly than you do normally.¹⁵</p>
<p>**Vigorous-intensity exercise</p>	<p>High effort required. You are puffing, sweating, and can only talk with pauses.¹⁵</p>

References:

14. World Health Organization. Physical Activity [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

15. Cancer Council Australia. "Exercise for people living with cancer" [Internet]. 2019. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org.au/assets/pdf/exercise-for-people-living-with-cancer>

| How colonoscopy prevents colon cancer?



By removing the polyps, doctor can prevent them from turning into cancer



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