

COLON HEALTH

The surgeons on the medical staff at SMMC are skilled in providing a wide range of services, including colonoscopy. Ask your doctor if this important outpatient procedure is right for you.

Or, for more information, visit

www.smmccares.com/colonoscopy

Family Medical Center Surgical Associates



Alan Abel, M.D.
General Surgery



Ladd Hoffman, M.D.
General Surgery



John Lang, M.D.
General Surgery

1501 W. 11th Place
Big Spring Texas 79720
432-263-6018

Members of the medical staff of



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Colonoscopy

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Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancer diagnoses, and often has no symptoms.

According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States, excluding skin cancers.

Regular screening can, in many cases, prevent colorectal cancer altogether. This is because some polyps, or growths, can be found and removed before they have the chance to turn into cancer. Screening can also result in finding colorectal cancer early, when it is highly curable.

What is colon cancer?

Colon cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, is the abnormal, uncontrolled growth of cells in the colon or rectum. These growths begin as polyps: a small, non-cancerous lump of tissue on the colon wall. Polyps are common, especially in people age 50 and over, and many pose no threat to your health. Others, however, can grow, bleed and obstruct the intestinal wall.

Colonoscopy

Colonoscopy is a diagnostic test and treatment. It is the most effective way to screen for – and remove – growths in the colon and rectal area that may pose a threat to your health. A simple and painless test, a colonoscopy is recommended for all individuals over age 50 as part of a preventive health regime. During a colonoscopy, a doctor can also remove and perform a biopsy of any abnormal tissue he or she finds.

What's my risk?

More than 90 percent of people diagnosed with this cancer are over age 50. Other factors that can affect your risk level:

- Personal and family medical history
- Family cancer history
- Lifestyle habits – diet, nutrition and physical activity level
- Lifestyle choices – alcohol consumption, smoking

Beginning at age 50, all individuals should have an annual colon cancer screening. Those who have a family history or other risk factors should talk with their doctors about starting screening at a younger age.

Warning Signs

Colorectal cancer may cause one or more of the symptoms below:

- Rectal bleeding
- Blood in the stool or toilet after a bowel movement
- A change in your bowel habits
- Persistent gas pain, bloating, fullness or cramps
- A feeling of discomfort or urge to have a bowel movement when there is no need
- Vomiting
- Sudden weight loss

These symptoms can also be related to other, non-cancerous conditions. Be sure to discuss symptoms with your doctor and ask any questions you may have.

Reduce your risk by:

- Eating at least five servings of fruit and vegetables per day
- Limiting fat intake to no more than 30 percent of your total calories
- Exercising regularly
- Maintaining an ideal weight for your body frame/height
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption