

Madigan Army Medical Center Referral Guidelines

Colon Polyps

Diagnosis/Definition

A polyp is any mucosal projection. Polyps are classified based by histology. The most common polyps encountered are adenomas, hyperplastic polyps, and sessile serrated polyps. Small distal hyperplastic polyps can be considered normal. Proximal right sided hyperplastic polyps can be precursors to sessile serrated polyps. Adenomas and sessile serrated polyps can lead to colon cancer and should be removed.

Initial Diagnosis and Management

- If seen at the time of sigmoidoscopy examination, polyps <8 mm should be biopsied (the open biopsy forceps is 7-8 mm) to determine histology.
- Barium enema is usually not indicated for the diagnosis or follow-up of a polyp.

Ongoing Management and Objectives

Periodic follow-up as indicated below.

Indications for Specialty Care Referral

- Adenomatous and sessile serrated polyps:
 - Refer all adenomas and sessile serrated polyps found by flex-sig.
- Colonoscopy in 5-10 years for 1-2 tubular adenomas < 1 cm in size.
- Colonoscopy in 3 years if polyps are > 1 cm, villous histology or numerous (3 or more).
- With history of "polyps", type unknown and path can't be obtained, assume adenomas.
- Refer all patients with polyps > 8 mm or mass by flex-sig, even without being biopsied (assumed adenoma, possible cancer if mass present).
- Surveillance after colon cancer resection: Colonoscopy 1 year after colectomy, then every 3 years but interval can be 5 years if last colonoscopy exam was normal.
- Patients with prior advanced adenomas (defined by being larger than 1cm/tubulovillous adenoma/high grade dysplasia) should continue at 5 yr intervals after normal follow-up examinations
- Small left sided hyperplastic polyps do NOT need referral unless otherwise specified by the colonoscopist.

Criteria for Return to Primary Care

Completion of colonoscopy.

References

NIH guidelines; [NIH Consensus Development Program
AALSD guidelines and recommendations](#)

Last Review for this Guideline: **June 2011**
Referral Guidelines require review every three years.

Maintained by the Madigan Army Medical Center - Quality Services Division
Clinical Practice and Referral Guidelines Administrator