

# Gastroenterologist Dr. Pratima Dibba with Medical Offices of Manhattan on polyps' relationship to colorectal cancer

*What Is a Colon Polyp and Why Is It Worrisome?*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Having a [colon polyp](#) is both bad and good news, according to [Pratima Dibba, MD](#), a gastroenterologist at [Medical Offices of Manhattan](#). The bad news? It means a small clump of cells has grown on the lining of colon that shouldn't be there. The good news? Discovering the growth during a colonoscopy means doctors can safely and completely remove the polyp before it has a chance to become cancerous.

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*Dr. Pratima Dibba*

Since colorectal cancer is, after skin cancer, is the third most-common cancer diagnosed in men and women in the United States, any opportunity to stop it from forming is valuable, says Dr. Dibba, who is fellowship-trained in gastroenterology and hepatology. About 153,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and

52,550 are expected to die of the disease this year, according to the American Cancer Society.

“Colorectal cancer is one of the few malignancies that can be prevented, just by undergoing regular colonoscopy screening tests and staying on top of any polyps that may form,” explains Dr. Dibba, who is passionate about preventive gastrointestinal care, colon cancer screening, and overall digestive health. “Most colon polyps aren't cancerous, but anyone can develop one. A person is at higher risk if they're 50 or older, male, overweight, a smoker, or are Black. Certain genetic irregularities can also make someone at higher risk of polyps, but this is rare.”

## Polyp symptoms

People whose doctors discover colon polyps during screening tests often have no idea the growth is there, Dr. Dibba notes. But some people with polyps develop symptoms such as:

- Change in bowel habits, such as constipation or diarrhea
- Change in stool color

- Iron-deficiency anemia, which can stem from polyps slowly bleeding
- Pain, which may happen if a polyp grows large
- Rectal bleeding, which can be a sign of polyps or other conditions, including hemorrhoids

Certain characteristics of polyps can make them more concerning, Dr. Dibba says. “The larger a polyp is, the more pre-cancerous polyps someone has, and the way polyp cells appear under a microscope are all factors doctors take into account to decide how often patients should be screened for colorectal cancer going forward,” she says.

But at the time a polyp is discovered, there’s only one thing doctors focus on: getting rid of it. “We do that on the spot by using a simple device attached to the scope that’s used in a colonoscopy to view the colon,” she explains. “It’s very satisfying to know that we can greatly lower a patient’s odds of developing colorectal cancer during a screening test.”

#### Tips for prevention

People can also lower their risk of developing colon polyps—and hence, colorectal cancer—by undergoing regular screenings, Dr. Dibba says. Beyond that, certain lifestyle measures can also help. These include:

- Eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Reducing fat consumption
- Limiting alcohol
- Quitting tobacco use, if applicable
- Staying physically active
- Maintaining a healthy body weight

Additionally, those considered at high risk of colorectal cancer due to family history should consider getting genetic counseling, Dr. Dibba says. “Anyone diagnosed with a genetic disorder that causes colon polyps will need regular colonoscopies starting earlier in adulthood,” she explains.

Most people, however, should begin colorectal cancer screening at 45 and should consider the testing an opportunity, not a burden.



Dr. Pratima Dibba

“Polyps aren’t cancer, but some have the potential to turn into cancer,” Dr. Dibba says. “That’s why we remove them—so they never have the chance.”

Medical Offices of Manhattan offers comprehensive health care at four locations in New York City. [www.medicalofficesofmanhattan.com](http://www.medicalofficesofmanhattan.com).

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