

## Colon Cancer Screening

### What is Colon Cancer?

Colon cancer begins as an abnormal tissue growth called a polyp and slowly develops over several years. Most polyps do not begin cancerous but over several years some polyps may become cancerous. Colon cancer may spread to the other parts of the body if it goes untreated. A colonoscope can help find and remove colon polyps before they become cancerous.

### Is Colon Cancer Preventable?

Colon cancer is treated more successfully when treated early. More than 90 percent of people survive 5 years or more when the cancer is confined to the rectum or colon. Still, less than 50 percent of Americans that are 50 or older are routinely screened.

### *What Puts You at Risk for Colon Cancer?*

Although the cause of colon cancer is still unknown, the disease is influenced by lifestyle and inherited factors.

- a) **Age:** Colon cancer can strike at any age, but most new cases are found in people over the age of 50.
- b) **Family History:** People that have a family history of bowel disease are at higher risk of having colon cancer
- c) **Diet:** Diets that are high in fat and low in fruits and vegetables may increase the risk of colon cancer.
- d) **Lifestyle:** Smoking, alcohol use, sedentary lifestyle, and obesity are included in these factors.