

A Short Note on Colon Cancer Diagnosis

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Symptoms and risk factors

Before delving into the diagnostic procedures, it's important to understand the symptoms and risk factors associated with colon cancer. While early-stage colon cancer often presents with no symptoms, as the disease progresses, individuals may experience:

- Changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation
- Blood in the stool or rectal bleeding
- Persistent abdominal discomfort, cramps, or pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue or weakness
- Feeling that the bowel does not empty completely

Several risk factors increase the likelihood of developing colon cancer, including age (individuals over 50 are at higher risk), family history of colon cancer or polyps, personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis), sedentary lifestyle, obesity, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and a diet high in red or processed meats.

Screening and early detection

Screening for colon cancer plays a pivotal role in its early detection, often before symptoms manifest. The most common screening method is the colonoscopy, which involves inserting a flexible, lighted tube equipped with a camera into the rectum and colon to examine for abnormalities, such as polyps or tumors. During a colonoscopy, if polyps are detected, they can be removed and biopsied to determine if they are cancerous or precancerous.

Other screening methods include fecal occult blood tests (FOBT)

the colon and rectum, which may warrant further investigation through biopsy or molecular testing.

While significant strides have been made in the diagnosis of colon cancer, ongoing research, innovation, and collaboration are essential for further improving detection rates, refining risk stratification, and advancing personalized treatment approaches. By harnessing the collective expertise of clinicians, scientists, and patients, we