

# COLON CANCER

*Life is a long lesson in humility. –J.M Barrie*

## Colon cancer - Basics

- A new and abnormal growth of tissue arising from the luminal surface of the large bowel
- The most common gastrointestinal cancer and the second leading cause of death by cancer (behind lung cancer) in the US.
- Most colorectal cancer cases are connected to diet and lifestyle.
- It takes between 10-15 years for abnormal colorectal cells to grow into polyps. Regular screening allows polyp detection and removal

## Signs and symptoms

- Abdominal pain
- Rectal bleeding
- Change in bowel habits
- Iron-deficiency anemia

## Screening

- Stool-based tests or colonoscopy



## Colon cancer prevention strategies

- Maintain healthy weight, stay physically active.
- Avoid processed meats that have been preserved with salt or chemical additives, such as bacon, ham, salami, pastrami, pepperoni, hot dogs, sausages, etc. Consuming processed meats can increase risk of colon cancer by 50%.
- Eat diet rich in vegetables, herbs, and some fruit - they contain dietary fiber, and phytochemicals which help reduce inflammation and eliminate carcinogens.
- Avoid omega-6 polyunsaturated fats found in industrial vegetable oils. Limit sugar, alcohol, avoid tobacco smoking.
- Normalize vitamin D levels. Serum vitamin D levels greater than or equal to 40 ng/ml decrease risk of cancer by 71%.
- Maintain adequate magnesium (Mg) and selenium intake - higher intakes of dietary Mg are associated with lower risk of colorectal tumors.