

### COLON CANCER

Colon cancer is the most prevalent cancer in Singapore. The probability of an individual here developing colorectal cancer is approximately 1 in 20 – among the highest in the world. If diagnosed early, the cure rate is as high as 90 percent.

The colon, also called the large intestine, is responsible of getting rid of waste the body no longer needs by absorbing water, breaking down waste and moving it into the rectum. Symptoms of dysfunction include bloating, gas and pain.

#### Can we prevent colon cancer?

“You can reduce your risks by eating a healthy balanced diet,” says **Dr Quah Hak Mien**. “A low-calorie diet that includes at least five servings of vegetables and fruit daily is important for a healthy colon. Reduce your intake of red meat cooked at high temperatures, for example barbecued, and avoid fatty foods, especially those from animal sources.

Drink alcohol in moderation – no more than one drink per day for women and two per day for men. Exercising two to three times per week for half an hour to an hour helps, too. Cigarette smoking has been confirmed to contribute to colon and rectal cancer, not only to lung cancer, so it’s time to quit smoking as well.

Regular screening by means of a colonoscopy is essential from the age of 50, or earlier if you have a family history of colorectal cancer. Caught early, any polyps that may eventually become cancerous can be easily removed; this can save your life.

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