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PATIENT CONNECTION



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Colorectal Cancer Facts

Overall, the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 20 (5%). It's expected to cause about 50,310 deaths this year.

If caught early, colorectal cancer is 90% curable.

The American Cancer Society recommends that beginning at age 50, both men and women, should be tested and retested once every five to ten years.



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Barrett's Esophagus

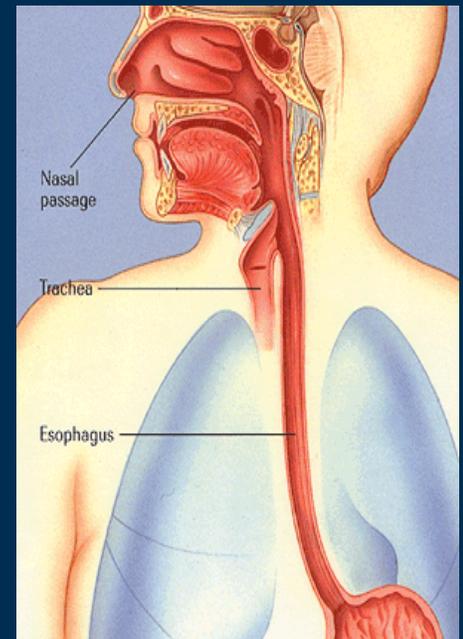
Barrett's esophagus is a complication that may arise from GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease). The esophagus' normal lining tissue changes to tissue which is similar to the lining of the intestine. About 10% of people with chronic GERD symptoms develop Barrett's esophagus.

Barrett's esophagus is associated with a small increased risk of developing esophageal cancer. Consequently, it's important to have regular checkups for precancerous cells, which can be treated to prevent esophageal cancer.

Barrett's esophagus risk factors include early onset of GERD, current or past smoking, chronic GERD, people over age 50, and overweight (especially if carried around the middle).

There are no specific symptoms associated with Barrett's esophagus. It can only be diagnosed with an upper endoscopy and biopsy. A primary objective of treatment is to prevent or slow the development of Barrett's esophagus by treating and controlling acid reflux.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and WebMD



Thyroid Disease

The thyroid is a small gland at the base of the neck that makes thyroid hormones, which controls various biological functions. Thyroid disease arises when a person's thyroid produces too little or too much of the hormone.

Hyperthyroidism occurs when there is an overproduction of thyroid hormones. Hypothyroidism occurs when there is an underproduction of thyroid hormones

Signs and symptoms of hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism vary, depending on the severity of the hormone deficiency or overabundance. But in general, problems tend to develop slowly, often over a number of years.

Contact Dr. Kopp's office to schedule an appointment to test your thyroid levels.

Sources: Mayo Clinic

Hypothyroidism signs and symptom may include:

- Fatigue
- Depression
- Impaired memory
- Increasing sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Dry skin and puffy face
- Unexplained weight gain
- Muscle weakness
- Elevated blood cholesterol level
- Muscle aches, tenderness and stiffness
- Pain, stiffness or swelling in your joints
- Heavier or irregular menstrual periods
- Thinning hair
- Slowed heart rate



Depression Symptoms

Everyone feels sad from time to time. However, if the feelings of sadness, emptiness and/or despair don't seem to go away, you may have depression. Depression is different from general sadness. It tends to consume your day-to-day life, impacting your ability to sleep, work, eat and enjoy life. Often the person feels intense feelings of worthlessness, helplessness and hopelessness. Also, it can appear as anger, aggressiveness and restlessness (most common in men).

Symptoms of depression, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, may include:

- Persistent feeling of sadness or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Feeling of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Anger, irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies which were once pleasurable
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, or cramps
- Digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Difficulty concentrating, recalling details and making decisions

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression, contact Dr. Kopp to discuss your options.

Source: *National Institute of Mental Health*

The Brain & Gut Connection

For decades researchers thought anxiety and depression contributed to digestive problems such as irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, diarrhea, and stomach pain. However, current research suggests it may be the other way around. Some are finding evidence suggesting the gastrointestinal system may send signals to the central nervous system triggering mood changes. In other words, how you feel can be related to what is going on in your gut.

A recent article from Johns Hopkins, entitled *The Brain-Gut Connection* explains that,

"Hidden in the walls of the digestive system, this 'brain in your gut' is revolutionizing medicine's understanding of the links between digestion, mood, health and even the way you think. Scientists call this little brain the enteric nervous system (ENS). And, it is not very little. The gut's brain is comprised of two thin layers of more than 100 million nerve cells lining your gastrointestinal tract from esophagus to rectum."

The main role of the gut's brain (ENS) is to control and manage the digestion process. "The enteric nervous system does not seem to be capable of thought as we know it, but it communicates back and forth with our big brain— with profound results," says Jay Pasricha, M.D. director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Neurogastroenterology.

Source: *John Hopkins*

