NHS
Genomic Medicine Service

Serrated Polyposis Syndrome (SPS)

Information for patients



This booklet was given to you by:

Clinician: _____

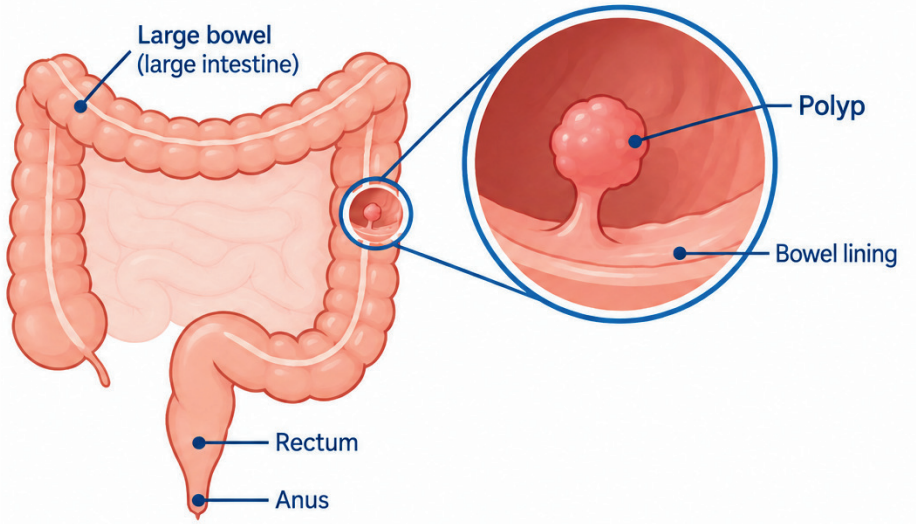
Contact details: _____

Why have I been given this information booklet?

You have been given this information booklet because you have had polyps in your bowel called serrated or hyperplastic polyps.

What is a polyp?

A polyp is a small growth. Polyps usually develop in the large bowel.



How common are serrated or hyperplastic polyps?

Serrated - or hyperplastic polyps are often found during a colonoscopy, especially as we get old. About 1 in 5 people who have a colonoscopy have this type of polyp.

Adenomas are another type of bowel polyp. This booklet is about serrated or hyperplastic polyps, not adenomas. Some people may have both types of polyp.

Having one or a few polyps is quite common. Having lots of polyps is less common. Sometimes, this can be caused by an inherited condition. The chance of an inherited condition depends on how many polyps you have, their size and the type of polyps found.

What are serrated polyps?

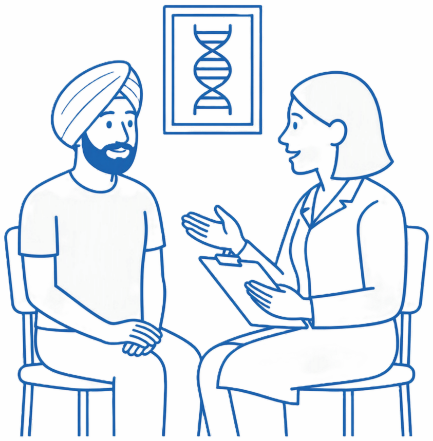
"Serrated" is the name used for a group of bowel polyps. When these polyps are looked at under a microscope, they can be grouped into different types:

- Hyperplastic polyp
- Sessile serrated lesion (SSL)
- SSL with dysplasia
- Traditional serrated adenoma
- Mixed polyp

Small hyperplastic polyps are usually harmless. Other types of serrated polyps are not cancer, but some can slowly change and become cancer over time. This is why it is important to check for and remove these polyps when needed.

What is Serrated Polyposis Syndrome?

Most people with serrated polyps do not have Serrated Polyposis Syndrome (SPS). Only a small number of people have SPS.



People with SPS develop many serrated polyps in the bowel. Doctors use a set of rules, called diagnostic criteria, to diagnose SPS. These look at how many serrated polyps you have, their size and where they are in the bowel.

Most people with SPS do not have any symptoms from these polyps, and they are often only found during a colonoscopy. Occasionally, people may experience symptoms such as bleeding from the bottom, a change in bowel habits, or tummy discomfort. SPS does not usually cause health problems in other parts of the body.

What is my chance of getting bowel cancer if I have SPS?

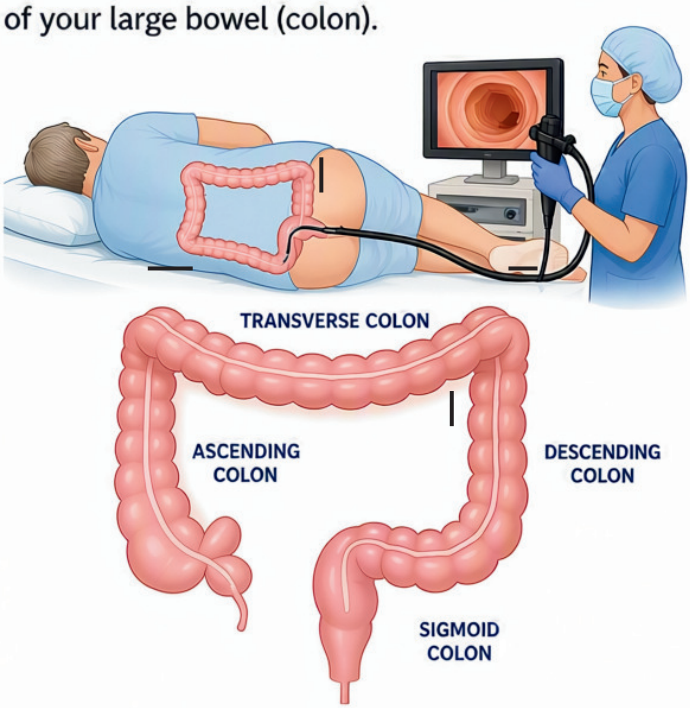
People with SPS have a higher chance of developing bowel cancer. The lifetime chance of developing bowel cancer is thought to be about 15-30 in 100 (15-30%) if regular screening colonoscopies are not carried out.

There is no cure for SPS, but regular colonoscopies can greatly reduce the chance of developing bowel cancer. During a colonoscopy, any polyps that are found can be removed before they become cancer.

Recent studies suggest that the chance of developing bowel cancer is much lower in people with SPS who have regular colonoscopies.

How a colonoscopy works

A colonoscopy lets the doctor look at the inside of your large bowel (colon).





What causes SPS?

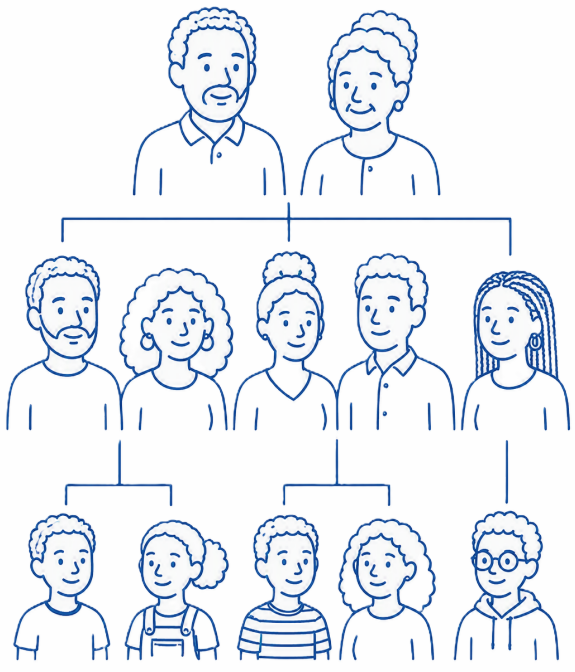
We do not yet know exactly what causes SPS. It may be due to a mix of genes, lifestyle and other factors. Research is still taking place.

SPS can sometimes run in families. Close relatives of someone with SPS may have a higher chance of developing bowel polyps or bowel cancer. However, SPS is rarely caused by a change in one known gene.

Smoking has been linked with SPS, but this does not mean that smoking causes it. Many people with SPS have never smoked.

Genetic testing is available for some people with SPS. It is mainly used to check for other inherited conditions that can cause bowel polyps. Your health care team will tell you if testing may be helpful for you.

We may learn more about the causes of SPS in the future. You can ask your doctor or genetics team if you need another review about genetic testing, especially if there are changes to your health or family history.



How is Serrated Polyposis treated?

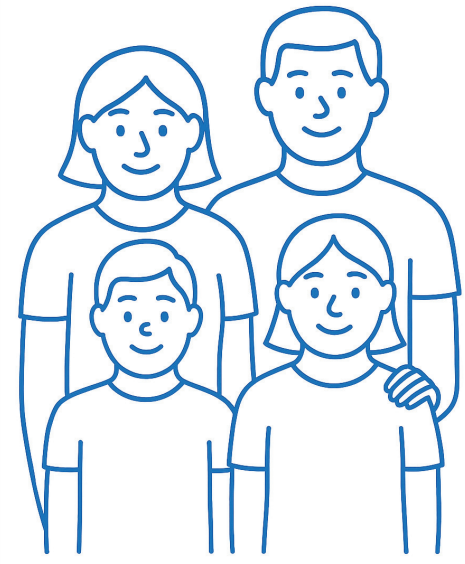
If you have SPS, you will usually need a colonoscopy every 1 to 2 years. How often you need a colonoscopy will depend on the number of polyps you have, their size and the results from any polyps that have been removed. Your bowel team will arrange these appointments if needed.

During a colonoscopy, the aim is to remove any polyps that are large enough to need treatment (usually 5 mm or larger). Sometimes, if there are many polyps, more than one colonoscopy is needed to remove them all safely.

Most people with SPS can be cared for with regular colonoscopies. A small number of people may need an operation if there are too many polyps to remove safely during colonoscopy.

Advice for family members

If you have SPS, your close adult relatives may need bowel screening. This includes your parents, brothers, sisters and children.



UK guidelines recommend a colonoscopy every 5 years, usually starting at age 40. Screening may start earlier if SPS was diagnosed at a young age in your family.

The screening offered may be a little different depending on where your relative lives and the services available in their area. It is important to tell your close relatives that you have SPS. They can then speak to their own doctor about what bowel screening is recommended and available to them.

What can I do to reduce my chance of bowel cancer?

As with everyone, it is important to look after your health.

Try to:

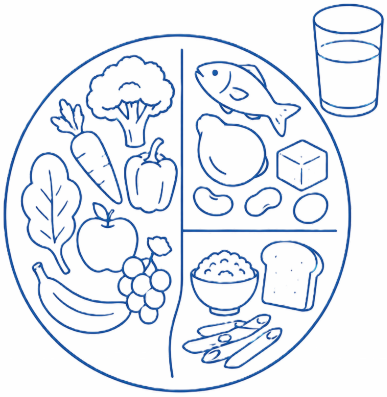
- eat a healthy, balanced diet
- keep to a healthy weight
- limit how much alcohol you drink
- avoid smoking

For further information please scan the QR code or visit www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/risk-factors/reducing-your-risk

It is also important to know the possible signs of bowel cancer. Speak to your GP if you notice blood in your poo, a change in how often you poo, tummy pain or unexplained weight loss. Do not wait for your next screening test or colonoscopy.

In England, people aged 50 to 74 are usually sent an NHS bowel cancer screening test every 2 years. If you have SPS, this test does not replace your regular colonoscopies. Please follow the screening and colonoscopy advice given by your bowel team.





Where can I get further information/support?

The Polyposis Registry (St Mark's Hospital) - supports people with polyposis conditions, including SPS. They offer advice, screening plans, and genetic counselling: www.stmarkshospital.nhs.uk/the-polyposis-registry

Polyposis Patient - friendly online community for people and families affected by polyposis conditions: www.polyposispatient.support

More information about SPS is available from the **NHS Genomics Education Programme**. Some medical language is used: www.genomicseducation.hee.nhs.uk/genotes - *search 'serrated polyposis syndrome'.*

About this booklet

This booklet provides general information only. Your care will be based on your own needs and the services available in your area. This leaflet does not replace guidance from your healthcare professional.

Need more help?

If you want more information or need help understanding this leaflet, please contact your healthcare team.

Your feedback

We would value your feedback on this leaflet, whether you are a patient, carer, family member or NHS clinician. Please scan the QR code or follow the link below to provide your feedback.
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