

# Personalized Letter

Dear [Patient],

Your colonoscopy that [Doctor] performed on [Date] revealed a growth in the large intestine (colon) called a polyp. [Doctor] removed this polyp during your procedure. A picture of your polyp before and after its removal is shown below.



Adenoma (polyp) seen in your colon



Same area seen after the polyp was removed

There are two major types of polyps, adenomas and hyperplastic polyps. **Your polyp was found to be an adenoma.** An adenoma is a “pre-cancerous” growth, which means with time it could turn into cancer. In fact, 1 of 10 people with an adenoma may develop colon cancer within 10 years if the adenoma is *not* removed.

[Doctor] completely removed your polyp. However, 3 out of 10 people with an adenoma, like yourself, will develop another adenoma within the next 3-5 years. Any new adenomas can also turn into cancer. It is therefore very important that **you undergo a follow up colonoscopy in [3-5 years]** as we discussed.

Also, because you have had an adenoma, your siblings are [estimated risk, e.g. “about 2 times”] more likely to get colon cancer than the siblings of people without polyps. Your children may also be at increased risk. Therefore, it is important for you to **tell your close family members** about your diagnosis, and **ask them to speak with their own physicians about the need for screening.**

We hope you are doing well, and if you have any questions please contact me at [phone number].

Sincerely,

[Endoscopist]

## Colorectal Cancer Risk Estimates for Siblings \*

*(Personalized Letter)*

The following risk estimates are inserted in the sentence:

“Because you have had an adenoma, your siblings may be [2-5 times] more likely to get colon cancer than the siblings of patients without polyps.”

<i>Risk Factor</i>	<i>Relative Risk of Sibling</i>
Age of patient at diagnosis of adenoma (yr):	
< 50	4X ↑
50-59	2X ↑
≥ 60	No ↑
Parental history of colorectal cancer and	
Adenoma patient < age 50	5X ↑
Adenoma patient 50-59	3X ↑
Adenoma patient ≥ 60	2X ↑

For patients diagnosed at age  $\geq 60$  with no parental history of colorectal cancer, the relevant line in the personalized letter is revised to state:

“Because you have had an adenoma, your siblings may be more likely to get colon cancer than the siblings of patients without polyps.”

Reference: Winawer SJ, Zauber AG, Gerdes H, et al. Risk of colorectal cancer in the families of patients with adenomatous polyps. *N. Engl J Med* 1996;334:82-7.