

New Surgery for Colorectal Cancer

Colon cancer is a common disease in Hong Kong and its incidence rate is growing. The etiology of colon cancer is still unknown though dietary and genetic factors are closely related to the disease. Some studies showed that high intake of animal meat and fat were associated with its occurrence. Moreover, people with a family history of colorectal cancer also have a higher risk of getting colon cancer. Symptoms of colorectal cancer include change in bowel habit, blood in stool, pain, weight loss and unexplained anaemia.

Colorectal polyps are commonly found among people who aged 50 or above. Although most of them are benign, some polyps may develop to malignant tumours. Hence, the removal of those polyps is necessary to prevent subsequent cancer.

Surgery is the main treatment for colorectal cancer and adjuvant treatment with chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy may also be used in some situations. Surgery involves removing the tumour and its surrounding tissues. However, conventional surgical treatment requires a large wound up to 15cm to 20 cm long. Wound complications, like infection and pain, may occur after surgery. Recently, surgery using laparoscopic techniques has been widely applied to patients with colorectal diseases including cancer. Laparoscopy is a minimally invasive operation, which provides a number of advantages, including lower the risk of the wound and other complications, shorter recovery period and less post-operative pain.

As colorectal cancer is asymptomatic in an early stage, appropriate screening, especially in high risk population, is recommended. Food with high fibre and low fat are highly recommended for its prevention.