



## RECTAL BLEEDING FACT SHEET

### **What causes Rectal Bleeding?**

Rectal bleeding can be caused by many different digestive disorders, including:

- A cancer or polyp in the colon (large intestine) or rectum
- Hemorrhoids
- Diverticular disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Anal fissures or abscesses

### **Is Rectal Bleeding serious?**

Anyone who experiences rectal bleeding must see his/her doctor! While the cause of bleeding may only be an annoying hemorrhoid, it could also be a pre-cancerous polyp or cancerous tumor. Never assume rectal bleeding is caused by a hemorrhoid.

### **How does a physician diagnose the cause of Rectal Bleeding?**

To make a proper diagnosis, your physician will examine your anus to determine if your bleeding is caused by a hemorrhoid. Everybody has hemorrhoids, but not all hemorrhoids produce symptoms.

Your physician also may examine the rectum. This procedure involves inserting a small lighted scope into your rectum to see if any polyps, tumors or diverticular (small pouches on the lining of your colon) are present in the rectum and lower portion of the colon. The procedure, called a sigmoidoscopy, is performed in the office with little to no discomfort. If your physician needs to look at the entire colon, a colonoscopy may be recommended. This procedure is performed on an outpatient basis.

### **How is Rectal Bleeding treated?**

The cause of your rectal bleeding determines the treatment. Your physician will discuss treatment options once the cause of your bleeding has been diagnosed.