



# Cigs, clots and colonoscopy screenings

Your health is more than taking daily vitamins, eating a salad for lunch, and snacking on protein bars. Here are some common questions from drivers who are interested in quitting bad habits and doing better preventive maintenance.



**Q** *I really want to stop smoking, but simply cannot do it. Do you recommend a program? Meds? Acupuncture, hypnosis?*

**A** Those methods are often effective. In my opinion, the best treatment is a good doctor who can tailor a program to fit you, the patient. Go to a physician you trust and say: "I want to quit smoking." Do this as soon as you can. Don't wait.

Most people stop when they have their first heart attack or are diagnosed with COPD or lung cancer. COPD is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. It is a chronic lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. Both COPD and lung cancer can be fatal.

Smoking is a hand-to-mouth addiction, and you must be educated on why and how to quit.

**Q** *I am a driver who has driven more than 20 years*

*over the road. Last year I had a blood clot in my leg. Can you tell me a bit about blood clot assessment? How do you know you have one? What do you do?*

**A** Most blood clots occur in people who are sedentary. Truck drivers sit and do not walk as much as other professions. And this is the biggest risk factor. Other risk factors include obesity and smoking, as well as genetic factors. Some clots form following trauma associated with extended bed rest.

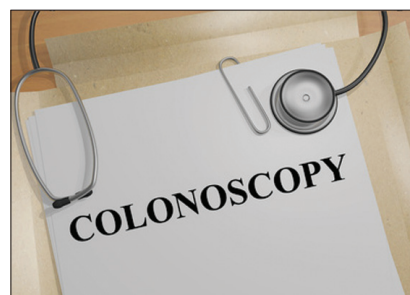


Assessment is primarily a history of pain in the lower leg (calf) or thigh on the inside of the extremity. The leg is tender or painful on examination, and in most cases swollen. Diagnostic tests are available as well. Treatment is urgent since the clot can dislodge and go to the lungs, causing serious medical problems including death. Treatment is to start blood thinners and correct the risk factors if possible.

**Q** *When should you start getting colonoscopy screenings? What age? How often is it necessary, and is there a simple screening or do you*

*have to go through the prep and colonoscopy?*

**A** If symptoms like rectal bleeding or black stools occur, you should see a physician no matter what age you are. Colonoscopy testing can start as early as 20-30 years of age in high-risk individuals with a history of



family cancer. However, most screening begins at age 50. With a colonoscopy, you must prepare with a colon cleansing; otherwise, all the doctor sees is stool. You will be sedated.

Several fecal (stool) tests that can be done in your home require no colon cleansing prep and no sedation. You can get a kit from your doctor and, after collecting a stool sample on a provided card, return it to your physician for lab testing. The lab looks for traces of blood. **LL**

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*This column is the opinion of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Land Line Magazine or its publisher. Everyone's health situation is different. If you have questions regarding medical issues, consult your personal physician.*