

What is the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery?

The American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery (ABCRS) was founded in 1935 for the purpose of certifying those colon and rectal surgeons who have met specific educational requirements and completed an examination process. A major reason for establishing the specialty board was to identify the colon and rectal surgeon meeting a certain standard of excellence. The ABCRS is an independent, non-profit organization with worldwide recognition. It is one of the twenty-four certifying boards that are members the American Board of Medical Specialties. The Members of the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery are distinguished colon and rectal surgeons in education, research, and practice in the United States and Canada.

What Does it Mean to be Certified by the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery

The surgeon who has attained Certification by the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery (ABCRS) has specialized knowledge and skill with regard to problems of the colon, rectum, anus and small bowel. In addition to having proficiency in the field of general surgery, board certified colon and rectal surgeons have attained particular expertise in diagnosis as well as medical and surgical management (including preoperative and postoperative care) in the following areas:

Anorectal conditions

- Hemorrhoids
- Fissures
- Abscesses
- Fistulas

Inflammatory bowel disease

- Chronic ulcerative colitis
- Crohn's disease

Diverticulitis

Colonic neoplasms

- Cancer
- Polyps
- Familial polyposis

Endoscopy of the colon and rectum

- Rigid and flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Endoscopic polypectomy

Intestinal and anorectal physiology for management of

- Anal incontinence
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Rectal prolapse

What is Board Certification?

The Board Certification process includes the following components:

1. **Educational**

- Must have graduated from an accredited medical school.
- Must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of five years of graduate general surgical education in an accredited residency program in the United States or Canada.
- Must have satisfactorily completed at least one year of colon and rectal surgical training in an accredited residency program in the United States or Canada. In addition to the general surgical background, the candidate surgeon must have obtained operative and patient management experience with diseases of the colon and rectum as deemed adequate by the Board.

2. **Review of Credentials**

- After satisfactory completion of their graduate education, surgeons may apply for certification by the ABCRS.
- Candidates must have successfully completed the written Qualifying examination and the oral Certifying examination of the American Board of Surgery.
- Candidates provide a detailed colorectal operative experience record and recommendations from training program directors for review by the ABCRS.

3. **Examinations**

- Applicants for certification must first pass a day-long written Qualifying examination which assesses their knowledge base. This examination includes testing in Radiology and Pathology as these disciplines relate to colon and rectal surgery.
- After satisfactory completion of the Qualifying examination, candidates are admissible to the oral Certifying examination. During this examination candidates are each interviewed by three teams of prominent colon and rectal surgeons who evaluate the candidate's ability to manage ordinary and complex colon and rectal surgical problems and determine if the candidates should be granted certification.

What is the Meaning of Certification by the ABCRS?

To be Certified by the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery, the surgeon must have met a standard in colon and rectal surgery by fulfilling specified educational, credentialing and examination requirements.

Since 1990, the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery has issued certificates that are valid for eight years. Once certified, the colon and rectal surgeon who wishes to maintain certified status upon expiration of the original certificate must complete a recertification process. Diplomates certified prior to 1990 were issued certificates having no expiration date, and they are not affected

by time limited certification.

The recertification process includes a review of credentials to determine if the colon and rectal surgeon has continued surgical education, is respected by peers and is active in the practice of colon and rectal surgery. Successful completion of a written examination completes the recertification process, and the colon and rectal surgeon's certification is extended for an additional eight years.

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