



Bowel cancer screening

A guide to bowel cancer screening in England



Bowel Cancer^{UK}
Beating bowel cancer together

What is bowel cancer screening?

Bowel cancer screening uses a simple test to look for blood in poo. Blood can indicate the presence of cancer or polyps (non-cancerous growths). Screening can detect tiny amounts of blood in poo, which can't normally be seen.

What does the test involve? Why is it important?

The test is quick and easy to use. It will be posted to you so you can do it in the privacy of your own home.

You will be sent a small tube with liquid in and a stick attached to the lid. You use the stick to take one small poo sample and then put it back in the tube.

You will be given a self-sealing freepost envelope to send the test back to the screening centre.

Full instructions and a more detailed information leaflet are included on the inside lid of the box that your test comes in.

Bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer in England, but it's treatable and curable, especially if diagnosed early.

Screening aims to detect bowel cancer at an early stage, when treatment has the best chance of working.

The test can also find polyps (non-cancerous growths) which might develop into cancer. Polyps can easily be removed to lower the risk of bowel cancer.

Who can take part?

If you're aged **60 – 74** you will receive a screening test in the post every two years.

If you're **75 or over**, you can ask for a test every two years by phoning the free bowel cancer screening helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

If you lose your test you can request another one by phoning the free bowel cancer screening helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

Remember

Bowel cancer screening is for people with no symptoms. Screening looks for signs of bowel cancer before symptoms appear.

What happens after the test?

You will usually get the results of your test within two weeks.

Most people will be told they do not need any further investigations. If this happens you won't need any more tests, but you should still see your GP if you develop any symptoms. You will be sent the screening test again in two years if you're still within the screening age.

If blood is found in your poo, you'll be asked to have an assessment with a screening nurse. You'll then be offered more tests that may include a colonoscopy. A colonoscopy is a test that uses a long thin tube with a camera to look inside the bowel. This doesn't mean you have cancer. Blood could be caused by non-cancerous polyps or another health problem.

Even if no further tests are needed, it's important that anyone worried about symptoms speaks to their GP.

The symptoms of bowel cancer can include:

-  Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
-  A persistent and unexplained change in bowel habit
-  Unexplained weight loss
-  Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
-  A pain or lump in your tummy

Did you know?

Bowel cancer screening saves lives. If bowel cancer is diagnosed at the earliest stage, nearly everyone can be successfully treated.

Find out more

Call the free bowel cancer screening helpline: **0800 707 60 60**

Visit our website:
bowelcanceruk.org.uk/screening



Bowel Cancer UK
Beating bowel cancer together

Bowel Cancer UK is the UK's leading bowel cancer charity. We're determined to save lives and improve the quality of life of everyone affected by the disease.

We support and fund targeted research, provide expert information and support to patients and their families, educate the public and professionals about bowel cancer and campaign for early diagnosis and access to best treatment and care.

To donate or find out more visit
[bowelcanceruk.org.uk](https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)

 [/bowelcanceruk](https://www.facebook.com/bowelcanceruk)

 [@bowelcanceruk](https://twitter.com/bowelcanceruk)

Please contact us if you have any comments about the information in this booklet: feedback@bowelcanceruk.org.uk