

Checking your bowel is healthy



The NHS bowel scope test for
people who are 55 years old



Who we are and what we do



We are Bowel Cancer UK.
We are a charity.



This booklet tells you how to

- Keep your bowel healthy
- Decide whether to have the **NHS bowel scope test**.



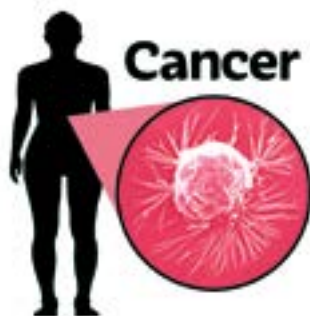
Some people get a disease in their bowel called **bowel cancer**.

Taking the **NHS bowel scope test** can help to stop you getting bowel cancer.

The NHS bowel scope test



The NHS will send you a letter when you are 55 years old to ask you to take a **bowel scope test**.



Finding out about bowel cancer early means you have a good chance of getting better.

What is your bowel



The bowel is inside your body, in the part you know as your tummy.

It takes away the waste that your body does not need.

This waste comes out of your body as poo when you go to the toilet.

Keeping your bowel healthy



You can keep your bowel healthy by

- Eating 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables every day
- Eating food that has fibre in it – for example brown bread, brown rice or porridge
- Drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water every day
- Doing some exercise every day.

Some things are unhealthy for your bowel



- Eating processed meat like ham, sausages, bacon and burgers

- Eating a lot of red meat like beef, lamb or pork



- Being very overweight and doing no exercise

- Drinking a lot of alcohol



- Smoking.

When should I go to the GP



You should go to your GP if

- You see any blood in the toilet, from your bottom or in your poo
- Your poo is runny and this is not normal for you
- You stop having poos and this is not normal for you
- You start to get very bad tummy pains
- You can feel lumps in your tummy
- You lose a lot of weight without going on a diet
- You feel tired all the time.



These symptoms do not mean you have bowel cancer. But it is always good to ask your GP so you can get checked out.

About the NHS bowel scope test



The bowel scope test uses a small camera to look inside your bowel.

The camera is on the end of a tube called a **scope**. It is very small.



The scope looks inside your bowel to see if there are any small growths called **polyps**.

Taking the polyps away can help you to stop getting bowel cancer.

It does not hurt to take the polyps away.



You will get a booklet with your letter so you know what to expect.

What to do after you get the letter



After your letter arrives, you will need to book an appointment to have your bowel scope test.

This will be at the hospital.



The telephone number you need to call is on the letter.

The hospital can tell you more about what happens at a bowel scope test.

They will send you a package in the post.



Inside the package there is

- A leaflet telling you about the test
- A liquid kit called an **enema**.

You will need to use the enema to make sure your bowel is clean before the test.

Using the enema at home



You need to use the enema before you go to your appointment.

The enema you get in the post looks like this.



You should use the enema **1 hour** before you go to the appointment.



If you do not want to use the enema at home, you can ask to do it in hospital.

You can ask for help to do this when you make your appointment.



Or you can ask your carer to help you use the enema.

How to use the enema



Read the instructions carefully before you start.

Get a towel and lay it out on the bed or the floor.



Lie on the towel on your left side with both knees bent up towards your chest.

Take the top off the enema tube carefully so you do not spill any.



Put the end of the tube into your bottom.

Gently squeeze all the liquid from the pouch into your bottom. If it is not going easily into your bottom then stop using it.

Take the pouch out of your bottom and keep lying down.

How to use the enema



Try to hold the liquid inside your body for 5 to 10 minutes. Do not worry if you can't hold it in for that long.

Go to the toilet to have a poo if you need to. Don't worry if no poo comes out.



Stay near a toilet for the next hour – just in case you feel you want to go for a poo again.

You can travel to the hospital after 1 hour.

What happens at the hospital



When you get to the hospital, show your appointment letter to the person at the reception desk.

A nurse or doctor will talk to you about the bowel scope test and check you understand.



You will have to sign a form to say you are OK for them to do the test.

The nurse or doctor will take you to a room and check you are OK.



You can ask them questions about the test before it happens.

They might give you a hospital gown to wear. This makes it easier for them to do the test.

What happens at the hospital



A doctor or nurse will take you into the room they will do the scope test.

The nurse will ask you to lie down on your left side with your knees up to your chest.



The nurse will put a small clip on your finger.

The nurse or doctor will wear gloves before they put their finger in your bottom.



They need to do this to check things are OK before they put the scope inside.

They will use slippery jelly to help the scope tube slide inside your bottom easily.

What happens at the hospital



The scope tube blows air into your bottom. This might feel a bit uncomfortable but the nurse will make sure you are OK.

The nurse will talk to you while the test is happening to check how you are feeling.



If the air feels uncomfortable, you should let the air come out of your bottom.

You can watch what is happening on a screen if you want to.



The nurse might ask you to move a little bit to change your position. Or they might ask if they can press your tummy to help the scope tube move around.

You can stop the test at any time.

What happens after the test

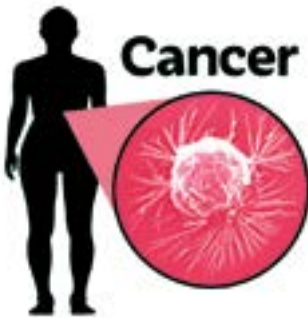


You might feel like you want to break wind.

The doctor will be able to tell you what they have seen in your bowel straight away.



The doctor will tell you if they have found any polyps in your bowel.



If the doctor thinks you might have cancer in your bowel, they will give you an appointment to see a specialist doctor.

Other tests



You may have to go for a test called a **colonoscopy**. A colonoscopy is like a scope test but with a longer tube.

The nurse or doctor will talk to you if they think you need this test.



You can find out more here

bowelcanceruk.org.uk/hospital-tests

Where to go to find out more



You can visit our website
bowelcanceruk.org.uk



You can tell us what you think about our booklet
feedback@bowelcanceruk.org.uk



You can also find out more
nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer-screening

Bowel Cancer UK is the UK's leading bowel cancer research charity. We are determined to save lives and improve the quality of life for all those affected by bowel cancer.

We support and enable research, educate patients, public and professionals about bowel cancer and campaign for early diagnosis and best treatment and care for all those affected.

Find out more at bowelcanceruk.org.uk

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To find out more about this booklet or tell us what you think email feedback@bowelcanceruk.org.uk

