



CANCER
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Together we will beat cancer

Spot bowel cancer early

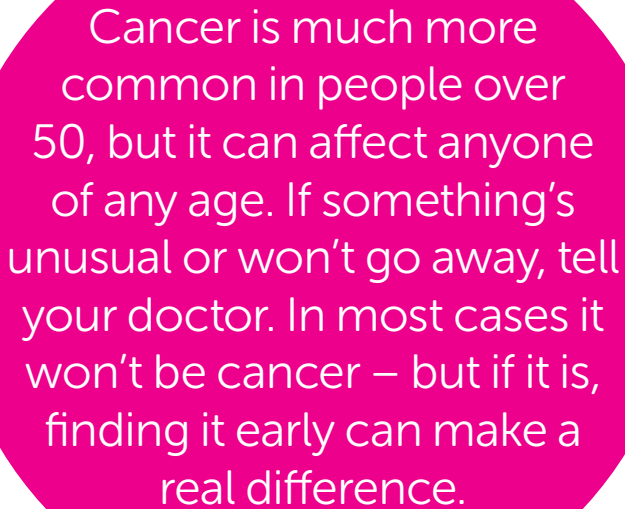


Take charge

Whether you've heard about it from a friend or family member, seen it in the news, or are just curious: if you want to know more about spotting the signs of bowel cancer, this leaflet is for you.

You'll find out about symptoms, tips for telling your doctor if something's not quite right, and some key facts about screening.

When it comes to your health, remember you're in charge.



Cancer is much more common in people over 50, but it can affect anyone of any age. If something's unusual or won't go away, tell your doctor. In most cases it won't be cancer – but if it is, finding it early can make a real difference.

Listen to your body

You know your body best, so don't ignore something that doesn't look or feel quite right – this includes any changes to your poo that aren't normal for you.

Talk to your doctor if you notice any of these:


- A change in your normal bowel habit, such as looser poo, pooing more often and/or constipation
- Bleeding from your bottom or blood in your poo (this can look red, or it can be black and make your poo look dark, like tar)
- Tummy pain (especially if it doesn't go away) or a lump in your tummy
- Losing weight without trying to


Have you noticed any of these? You could highlight or circle them and show this page to your doctor.


Even if it's not on this list, it's best to get any unusual changes checked out.

Cut your risk


More than half of all bowel cancer cases in the UK could be prevented. Lower your risk by:

 Eating more foods high in fibre, like wholegrain bread

 Eating less red and processed meat

 Keeping a healthy weight

 Going smoke free

 Cutting back on booze

 Being more active

Consider bowel screening

Screening looks for early signs of bowel cancer. **It's for people who don't have any symptoms.**

If you're registered with a doctor, you'll be invited to take part in screening every 2 years between the ages of 60 and 74 (or 50–74 in Scotland). It's important you read the information that comes with your invitation, so you can decide if you'd like to take part.

You'll be sent a poo testing kit which you can do in your own home.

And there are lots of ways to make collecting your poo sample a bit easier. Our top-tips include putting cling film over the toilet (remember to leave a dip!), putting a clean, empty grapes carton in the toilet to catch your poo, or covering your hand with a plastic bag or glove.



Even if you've been screened and no matter how old you are, tell your doctor about anything that's not normal for you.

Visit [cruk.org/screening](https://www.cruk.org/screening) to find out more.

Talk to your doctor

Talking to your doctor isn't always easy. Here are our tips to get the most out of your appointment:



Be honest. Tell the doctor about anything that's not normal for you, even if it doesn't seem that important or you think it might be a bit embarrassing. They've seen and heard it all before.



Be thorough. Mention all your symptoms and don't put it down to 'just getting older', or assume it's part of another health condition. If it's something that's bothering you, then your doctor will want to hear about it.



Stick with it. Don't worry you might be wasting your doctor's time. Even if you've been to see them already, they want to know if your symptoms haven't gone away, or if something still doesn't feel quite right.



Be prepared. Have a think about the changes, and roughly how long you've had them for. Writing down the things you want to say can help. And you can always bring a trusted friend or family member with you for support.

Early diagnosis saves lives

Remember, when bowel cancer is spotted early, treatment is more likely to be successful. Thanks to research, treatments are kinder and more effective than ever.



We're online...

Learn more about spotting cancer early, including information about screening across the UK, at cruk.org/spotcancerearly



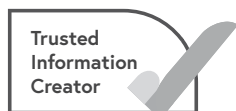
...and on the phone

Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for any information or support. Just call **0808 800 4040**.

More questions about the bowel screening programme? Call the free NHS helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

To provide any feedback on this leaflet or if you would like to know more about the sources used to create it, call **020 3469 8333** or email publications@cancer.org.uk

And if you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support us call **0300 123 1022**.



Patient Information Forum

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