



Bowel cancer screening

What is bowel cancer screening and why is it important?





NHS
Bowel Cancer
Screening Programme



What is bowel cancer screening?

- ❖ A type of test to determine whether you are at risk of bowel cancer. Screening can help detect bowel cancer at an early stage, when it is easy to treat. It can also be used to help check for, and remove, small growths in the bowel, called polyps, which can turn into cancer overtime.
- ❖ There is 2 types of test used in bowel cancer screening:
 - bowel scope screening
 - home testing kit
- ❖NHS bowel cancer screening is only offered to those aged 55 and above. If you're 55, you'll automatically be invited for a one-off bowel scope screening test, if it's available in your area. If you're 60 to 74, you'll automatically be invited to do a home testing kit every 2 years. If you're 75 or over, you can ask for a home testing kit every 2 years by calling the free bowel cancer screening helpline on 0800 707 60 60



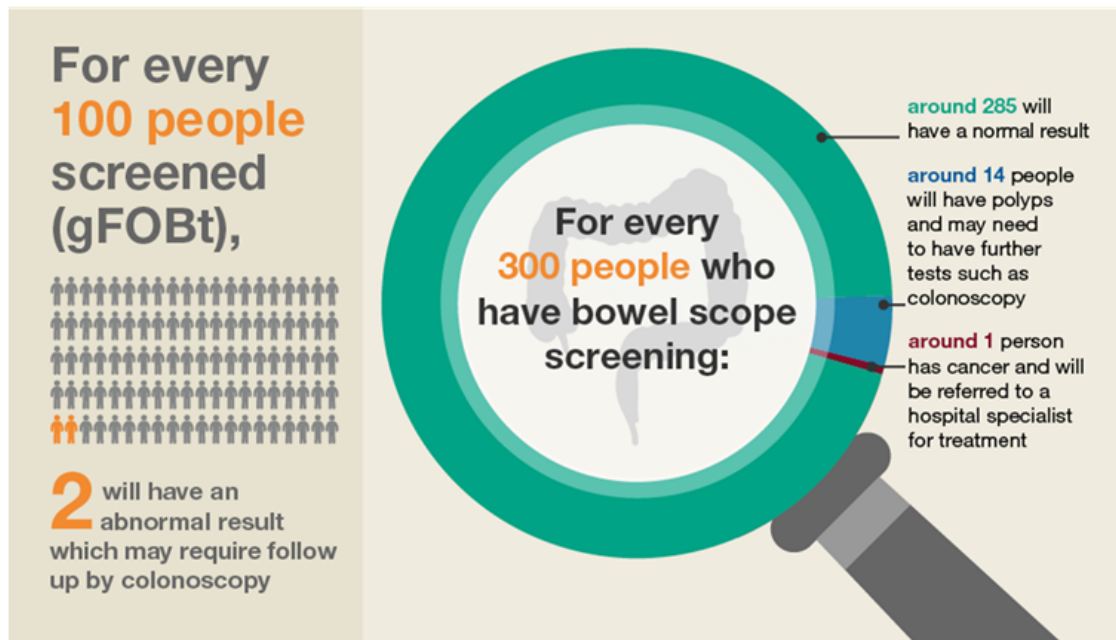
Risks of bowel cancer screening

- ❖ All screen tests are not 100% reliable- there is a chance that a cancer could be missed.
- ❖ There is also the chance that the tests carried out when investigating abnormalities may damage your bowel, however this is rare.

Bowel scope screening

- ❖ This is a test where a thin, flexible tube with a camera at the end is used to look for and remove any polyps inside your bowel. 2 weeks before this test, you will be sent a letter outlining the procedure, as well as a small plastic pouch containing a liquid to help clear your bowel, and instructions on how to use it. This liquid must be used an hour before the appointment.

What happens after screening?



Test Results

After 2 weeks, you will be sent your results.

- ❖ If polyps are found, you may be offered a colonoscopy to check for polyps further up your bowel, or you might be offered surgery to remove any polyps left in your bowel. This surgery only occurs on rare occasions.
- ❖ If a cancer is found, it will be arranged for you to see a bowel cancer specialist as soon as possible. Bowel scope screening is very safe. In rare cases, it could damage the bowel and cause serious bleeding that may require surgery.
- ❖ At home after the appointment, you should call 111 or see a GP if you have severe pain in your stomach/bottom or if there is blood in your faeces that does not go away after 24 hours.

Home testing kit

- ❖ This is a kit you use at home to collect small samples of your faeces and then post them to a laboratory so they can be checked for tiny amounts of blood, which could be caused by cancer.
- ❖ There is 2 different kits that can be used:
 - the faecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit, in which one sample of faeces is collected in a small plastic sample bottle and then posted back to a laboratory for testing.
 - the faecal occult blood (FOB) test kit, in which small samples of faeces are collected and then smeared on a special card. 2 samples of faeces should be taken 3 times on separate occasions, and then should be sent back in a sealed envelope to be tested in a laboratory.

Test results

After 2 weeks, your results should arrive.

- ❖ If there is an unclear result, it means that there may have been a tiny bit of blood present in the sample. You will be asked to repeat the test 1 or 2 more times to get a clearer result.
- ❖ If there is an abnormal result, it means that blood was found in the sample, however this does not necessarily mean that you have bowel cancer as the blood may be caused by something else e.g. piles. You will be offered a colonoscopy to check.

How to get a screening kit

- ❖ All men and women aged 60 to 74 are automatically sent a bowel cancer screening kit every 2 years as long as they are registered with a GP in England.

