

# Bowel Cancer Screening Fact Sheet

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# Bowel Cancer Screening

## 10 Key Facts

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\* If you have limited time – concentrate on the **5 'key facts'** that are in **bold**.

1. In England, men and women aged 52-74 are sent a bowel cancer screening kit in the post every two years. However, this age range is being reduced to start at age 50 soon, so you may receive your first kit earlier.
2. The bowel cancer screening programme uses a test called a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT).
3. The kit is completed in the privacy of your own home, sealed in the provided envelope and posted back to the screening centre.
4. It is not a test for cancer. The test checks for microscopic traces of blood in your poo. Traces of blood suggest that further investigation is needed. Screening can also find non-cancerous growths (polyps) in the bowel that may develop into cancer in the future.
5. Bowel cancer is also known as colorectal cancer or colon cancer.
6. \* **It is the 4th most common cancer in the UK.**  
42,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer in the UK each year.
7. \* **If your bowel habits change for 3 weeks or more – book an appointment to see your GP.**
8. \* **Bowel cancer screening saves lives** - screening can pick up changes that may lead to cancer, at an early stage. This often makes treatment easier and more successful.
9. \* **95% of people who are diagnosed with early stage bowel cancer will survive 5 years or longer.**
10. \* **Early detection saves lives** - if bowel cancer is diagnosed at the earliest stage, more than nine in ten people will be successfully treated.

# Bowel Cancer Screening Key Messages

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## Key Messages:

### If it's unusual for you – see your GP

We all know our own bodies. If you notice anything unusual in your bowel habits, lasting 3 weeks or more, see your GP.

3 weeks is a guide. Changes could be due to an illness, a change in medication, stress, or a change in diet. **Don't leave it any longer than 3 weeks.**

### Early detection saves lives

Those who regularly complete their bowel cancer screening kit, will have any early changes picked up by their bowel screen test. Usually **before** changes turn into cancer.

### Bowel cancer screening saves lives

Bowel cancer screening aims to find any changes in the bowel early **before** they have had chance to become cancerous.



# Bowel Cancer Screening Fact Sheet – How to Guide

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## **This simple briefing sheet aims to give you a couple of pointers for using any of the Answer Cancer fact sheets.**

These fact sheets are a great way to convey essential information in a brief, simple and easy to understand format.

They provide key information, facts and figures on cancer screening all in one place (A4 document).

## **How to use**

- Use in a group setting either in real life or over Zoom
- Use all or part of the fact sheet depending on time constraints
- Post facts daily on social media i.e. Facebook or WhatsApp group
- Add a couple of facts to your cancer presentation
- Use facts in a work team meeting

## **How to evaluate**

- How many facts you posted online?
- How many key messages were passed on?
- Were you able to have any brief advice conversations? If so, how many?
- Any case studies? Did you have an interesting conversation which you can anonymise? I.e. Someone reports they understand the importance of screening and will now complete their bowel cancer screening kit.

## **Top Tips**

- Send out the fact sheet to people before your engagement session, or afterwards as part of your follow up
- Can give as a handout at community facing engagements
- Fact sheets can be used to supplement and solidify any learning at engagement sessions
- Asking people if they want a copy of the fact sheet gives you a chance to add people to your contact database
- Collect data in line with GDPR regulations and display your Privacy Statement on any 'sign-up' documentation