

## RISK FACTORS FOR BOWEL CANCER



**Age:** The risk of bowel cancer increases as you age. About 40% of cases are diagnosed between the ages of 70 and 75, with the risk starting to rise from age 50.

### **Lifestyle and Social Habits:**

- A diet high in red and processed meats and low in fiber and calcium can increase risk.
- Having a BMI over 27.5 is a risk factor.
- Low levels of physical activity contribute to higher risk.
- Regular use of tobacco and alcohol increases risk.

### **Medical History:**

- Long-term conditions like ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease raise risk.
- Type 2 diabetes, acromegaly, Lynch syndrome, familial adenomatous polyposis, or having bowel polyps can increase risk.

**Family History and Genetics:** A family history of bowel cancer raises your risk, especially if a relative was diagnosed before age 50 or if multiple relatives have had it. Certain genetic conditions can also increase your risk.

## SUPPORT AVAILABLE

**Cancer Research UK** offers confidential support through cancer information nurses, who answer questions about all cancer aspects. **Contact them at 0808 800 4040 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) or visit [cruk.org](http://cruk.org).**

**Maggie's** offers free practical, emotional, and social support for individuals with cancer and their families. Contact details:

- **Website:** [maggies.org](http://maggies.org)
- **Phone:** 0300 123 1801
- **Email:** [enquiries@maggies.org](mailto:enquiries@maggies.org)

**A Maggie's Centre is located at Northampton General Hospital, Billing Road, with no appointment needed for drop-in visits.**

**Bowel Cancer UK** is the UK's leading bowel cancer charity. **Contact them on 0207 940 1760 (Mon-Fri, 9am–5pm) or email a nurse at [nurse@bowelcanceruk.org.uk](mailto:nurse@bowelcanceruk.org.uk) (response time is two working days). Visit their website at [bowelcanceruk.org](http://bowelcanceruk.org).**

# BOWEL CANCER

**What to keep an eye on, risk factors, the ins and outs of a at home FIT test kit, and where to find a helping hand!**



## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Changes in your poo, such as having softer poo, diarrhea or constipation that is not usual for you
- Needing to poo more or less often than usual for you
- Blood in your poo, which may look red or black - **if dark red or black call 911 or ask your GP for an urgent appointment and if there is a lot of blood, ie the toilet water is red or you see large clots go to A&E**
- Bleeding from your bottom - **if non stop go to A&E**
- Often feeling like you need to poo
- Tummy pain
- A lump in your tummy
- Bloating
- Losing weight without trying
- Feeling very tired or short of breath - these are signs of anaemia, which can be caused by bowel cancer

**If you or your partner notice anything from this list occurring for 3 or more weeks list speak to a doctor.**



## BOWEL SCREENING - FIT KIT

Bowel cancer screening checks for blood in your poo, which can be a sign of bowel cancer. People **aged 50 to 74** are sent a home test kit **every 2 years** to do and send in the post.

### Here's what todo with you at home FIT

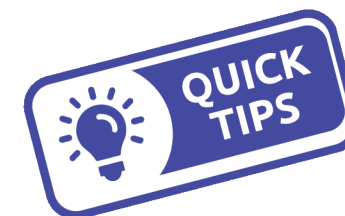
1. Use a clean container to catch your stool, avoiding contact with toilet water.
2. Open the sample bottle and remove the lid with the attached sample stick.
3. Scrape the stick along your stool until covered; only a small amount is needed.
4. Return the stick to the bottle and close it tightly.
5. Wash your hands.
6. Write the date on the sample bottle.
7. Place the bottle in the prepaid envelope, seal it, and post it promptly.

## TIPS FOR COLLECTING YOUR SAMPLE

Collecting you poo for the sample can be an embarrassing task here are some tips for ways to make it easier to get the sample.

- A clean, empty fruit carton, takeaway container, or ice cream tub.
- Folded toilet paper in your hand.
- A glove or plastic bag over your hand.
- Cling film over the toilet (leave a dip).
- Layers of folded toilet paper in the toilet bowl. Make sure your poo doesn't touch the water or toilet.

Once you've collected your poo sample on the stick, please post it back as soon as possible.



**TRY NOT TO BE EMBARRASSED. COMPLETING A FIT KIT TEST IS A NORMAL PART OF GETTING OLDER AND HELPS REDUCE YOUR RISK OF UNDIAGNOSED CANCER**