

TIPS FOR CANCER SCREENINGS

Attending a cancer screening can be a scary prospect. **In the UK cancer screening attendance is between 60 and 70%.** Cancer screening is vital for catching cancer early and improving survival rates significantly.

Here are some tips to help you feel more comfortable attending your screenings:

- You can have someone with you in the room - this could be a family member, friend, or chaperone.
- Do not feel embarrassed and remember you have complete control, you can ask to stop at any time
- You can ask for a male or female nurse to do the examination if it would make you more comfortable.
- Try not to be afraid or embarrassed to talk to the nurse or doctor – telling them how you feel will help them understand what kind of support you might need



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.**

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

- **Website:** maggies.org
- **Phone:** 0300 123 1801
- **Email:** enquiries@maggies.org

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

Macmillan Cancer Support offers practical, medical, and financial assistance while advocating for improved cancer care. **Contact them on 0808 808 0000 (available 7 days a week, 8am–8pm; hours may vary for specialists) or visit macmillan.org.uk**

CANCER SCREENINGS

What to expect from a screening, tips to make it less daunting and where to get some support.





BOWEL SCREENING

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 to do 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.



CERVICAL SCREENING

Cervical screenings look for changes in the cells on the cervix. They are usually offered **every 5 years** to people with a cervix **aged 25 to 64**.

Here's what to expect during your screening:

1. Undress from the waist down behind a screen and use a provided sheet.
2. Lie back on the bed with legs bent, feet together, and knees apart; positions may change during the test.
3. A speculum will be gently inserted into your vagina, possibly with lubricant.
4. The speculum will be opened to view your cervix.
5. A soft brush will collect a small sample of cells from your cervix.
6. The speculum will be removed, and you can then get dressed.



BREAST SCREENING

A mammogram uses an x-ray to detect small, unnoticed cancers. Invitations are sent to women between **ages 50 and 53**, then every three years **until age 71**.

Here's what you can expect during a screening:

1. The mammographer will confirm your details and chat with you about any breast concerns you might have.
2. You'll have a private space to undress from the waist up.
3. Your breast will be gently positioned on the X-ray machine.
4. The machine will softly compress your breast for a few seconds to take the first X-ray. This might feel a bit uncomfortable.
5. A second X-ray will be taken after repositioning your breast.
6. The same steps will be done for your other breast.
7. Once the screening is done, you can dress in private. You'll typically receive your results within two weeks.