

Information for carers on NHS Bowel Screening programme

Bowel cancer is a common type of cancer in both men and women. About 1 in 20 people will get it during their lifetime. Screening can help detect bowel cancer at an early stage, when it's easier 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 over time.

Types of screening test - There are 2 types of test used in NHS bowel cancer screening:

- Bowel scope screening - This is a one off test offered to all people aged 55 years and over regardless as to whether you are showing any symptoms of bowel cancer. This is because some people can develop bowel changes internally that do not give any symptoms at an early stage, and treatment at this early stage can prevent further changes. This test is where a thin, flexible tube with a camera at the end is used to look for and remove any polyps inside your bowel. This can only be done if you do not require sedation and are able to take the bowel preparation solution beforehand.
- Home testing kit (the FOB test) - a kit you use to collect small samples of your poo and post them to a laboratory so they can be checked for tiny amounts of blood (which could be caused by cancer)
- If these tests find anything unusual, you might be asked to have further tests to confirm or rule out cancer.

When it's offered

- NHS bowel cancer screening is only offered to people aged 55 or over, as this is when you're more likely to get bowel cancer:
- If you're 55 years you'll automatically be invited for a one-off bowel scope screening test. If you miss this you can opt back into the bowel screening programme at 56 years
- 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
- If you're too young for screening but are worried about a family history of bowel cancer, speak to your GP for advice. Always see a GP if you have symptoms of bowel cancer at any age - don't wait to have a screening test.

Risks of screening

- No screening test is 100% reliable. There's a chance a cancer could be missed, meaning you might be falsely reassured.
- There's also a small risk that the bowel scope screening test and some of the tests you might have could damage your bowel, but this is rare.
- There are no risks to your health from the home testing kit and national guidance is that if a person lacks capacity to decide whether to take part in this test, carers and health professionals should proceed with completing this kit in their Best Interests .

Bowel Screening Pathway - Faecal Occult Blood (FOB) testing kits

FOB testing kits sent out by central service to all patients over 60 years of age

Carers receive the kit. Carers explain the reason for the FOB test with the service user using the provided information. Service user understands and agrees to complete the test. Carers support the service user to complete the kit as per instructions.

OR

Carers receive the kit. Carers discuss the reason for the FOB test with the service user. Service user is not able to understand or communicate to confirm their understanding so does not have capacity to consent.

National advice is that as this test is non invasive then where the person lacks capacity carers should support the completion of this kit as there are no risks so it is in the persons Best Interests (Mental Capacity Act.2005)

FOB Test completed and dispatched

Normal results, letter sent to service user to inform and test repeated 2 years later

Abnormal results lead to letter being sent to service user being invited by the Bowel Screening service for further investigations

Carers to contact Bowel Screening service to inform them that the patient has learning disabilities and any additional physical disabilities

Carers to contact Acute Liaison Nurses on 01438 845372 or email healthliaisonteam.referrals@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Support by health professionals to agree a plan that's right for this individual.

Bowel Screening Pathway - One off Bowel Scoping

One off Bowel Scope appointment sent by the Bowel Screening service to all patients over 55 years of age

Carers to assess service users Capacity to consent using the Bowel Scoping screening tool that follows this flowchart. Carers to contact the screening hub to request they carry out a suitability screening assessment **Freephone: 0800 707 60 60**

Service user has capacity and is able to attend the Bowel Scoping appointment

Service user does not have capacity and is NOT able to attend the Bowel Scoping appointment

Normal results meaning no polyps or cancer were found and no further treatment needed.

Abnormal results meaning that polyps were found and removed during the test, but they weren't cancerous. The service user might be offered a test called a colonoscopy to check for polyps further inside the bowel.

Carers need to record all steps taken to enable bowel screening and inform the GP that despite these actions the service user has not been able to undergo screening. GP to refer the patient to the Screening Hub so a FOB Test can be issued.

Carers to contact Acute Liaison Nurses on 01438 845372 or email healthliaisonteam.referrals@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Carers to ensure all staff supporting the service user have understood and embedded the "Signs and Symptoms of bowel cancer" information into day to day care.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722396/Bowel_scope_screening_easy_guide_July_2018.pdf

Support by health professionals to agree a plan that's right for this individual.

If a service user presents with symptoms of bowel cancer then all decisions about investigations must be reassessed and a new Mental Capacity Assessment/ Best Interests Decision based on new evidence.

Suitability Screening Checklist for Bowel Scoping

This checklist screening tool has been designed to support carers for people with learning disabilities to access the bowel screening service.

	YES	NO
Does the service user have the ability to understand the information provided about the risks and benefits of attending the Bowel Scoping appointment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES please contact the Bowel Scoping service to inform them that this patient has learning disabilities. If they are likely to become anxious and need reasonable adjustments please give the Bowel Scoping nurses this information.		
If NO you will need to provide this information in easy read format to help the service user understand the benefits and risks using the "Bowel Scope Screening - an easy guide" leaflet found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722396/Bowel_scope_screening_easy_guide_July_2018.pdf If you have concerns about this please discuss with a Community Learning Disability Nurse or if no nurse involved please refer to the Acute Liaison Nurses on 01438 845372 or email healthliaisonteam.referrals@hertfordshire.gov.uk		
<u>Record the steps you have taken above in this box including dates and staff names:</u>		
Does the service user now have the capacity to make this decision having been supported through easy read information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If NO then please contact the Bowel Scoping service to make them aware that this patient has learning disabilities. They will then carry out a suitability assessment with you to help assess individuals needs and the clinical risks in order to agree whether it is possible to proceed. The service is aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments and will be as flexible as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the service user able to be supported to undergo the Bowel Scoping procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If NO you need to ensure that all carers are aware of the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer and have monitoring processes in place to identify any future changes for this service user. Inform the GP of the outcome.		

Signs and Symptoms of Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer is very treatable but the earlier it is diagnosed, the easier it is to treat. People whose cancer is diagnosed at an early stage have a much higher chance of successful treatment than those whose cancer has become more widespread. If you have any symptoms, don't be embarrassed and don't ignore them. Doctors are used to seeing lots of people with bowel problems.

The symptoms of bowel cancer can include:

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
- A persistent and unexplained change in bowel habit
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- A pain or lump in your tummy

Most people with these symptoms don't have bowel cancer. Other health problems can cause similar symptoms. But if you have one or more of these, or if things just don't feel right, go to see your GP. Sometimes the bowel can become blocked which can cause sudden strong pains in the stomach area, bloating and feeling or being sick. You may also be unable to empty your bowels or pass wind. If you think you have a blocked bowel, see your GP straight away or go to a hospital accident and emergency department.

Bleeding

- There are several possible causes of bleeding from your bottom or blood in your bowel movements (poo). Bright red blood may come from swollen blood vessels (haemorrhoids or piles) in your back passage. Dark red or black blood may come from your bowel or stomach. Tell your doctor about any bleeding so they can find out what is causing it.

Change in bowel habit

- Tell your GP if you have noticed any persistent and unexplained changes in your bowel habit, especially if you also have bleeding from your back passage. You may have looser poo and you may need to poo more often than normal. Or you may feel as though you're not going to the toilet often enough or you might not feel as though you're not fully emptying your bowels.

Weight loss

- This is less common than some of the other symptoms. Speak to your GP if you have lost weight and you don't know why. You may not feel like eating if you feel sick, bloated or if you just don't feel hungry.

Tiredness

- Bowel cancer may lead to a lack of iron in the body, which can cause anaemia (lack of red blood cells). If you have anaemia, you are likely to feel very tired and your skin may look pale.

Pain or lump

- You may have pain or a lump in your stomach area (abdomen) or back passage. See your GP if these symptoms don't go away or if they're affecting how you sleep or eat.

(Reference - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer-screening/>)