

Ngā tohumate mate pukupuku  
whēkau me ngā tatauranga

# Bowel cancer symptoms and statistics

A guide for communities in Aotearoa.



## At a glance...

- Bowel cancer is the second-highest cause of cancer death in New Zealand.
- New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world and men are at increased risk of bowel cancer compared to women.
- Māori and Pacific patients are more likely to present at an emergency department for their first diagnosis and have a more advanced stage at presentation.
- Bowel cancer is more common in those aged over 50, but it affects people of all ages, even young people.

I'm forever grateful that my body told me that something wasn't quite right – and that my GP pushed me to have a colonoscopy.

LIANA, BOWEL CANCER SURVIVOR

## Look out for bowel cancer symptoms

Symptoms can come and go, so don't wait to see your GP if you have any of the following concerns, no matter what your age:

- Bleeding from the bottom (rectal bleeding).
- Change of bowel motions or habits that come and go over several weeks.
- Anaemia (iron deficiency).
- Severe, persistent or occasional abdominal pain.
- A lump or mass in the abdomen.
- Tiredness and loss of weight for no obvious reason.

## Four common statistics

1. Every year, more than 3,000 New Zealanders are diagnosed with bowel cancer and over 1,200 of us will die from it.
2. Bowel cancer can affect people of all ages - over 350 people aged under 50 are diagnosed each year.

3. One in every 18 Kiwis is estimated to develop bowel cancer in their lifetime.
4. 22% of Māori are diagnosed with bowel cancer in their 50's, compared to 12% for New Zealanders overall.

## Three ways to get checked for bowel cancer

1. The National Bowel Screening Programme is available for eligible men and women aged 60 to 74. This is scheduled to be fully rolled out by all DHBs by the end of 2021.
2. Make an appointment to see your GP.
3. You can test yourself using a BowelScreen Aotearoa Kit, available to purchase from our website.



## NEED SUPPORT?

Contact our bowel cancer support nurse:  
Email: [here4you@bowelcancernz.org.nz](mailto:here4you@bowelcancernz.org.nz)  
Phone: 0800 BCNZ NURSE (226 968)

Join our private Facebook group:  
[bowelcancernz.org.nz](https://www.facebook.com/bowelcancernz.org.nz) > Support > Finding Support

## CONTACT US

Bowel Cancer New Zealand Inc.  
PO Box 301517, Albany 0752, Auckland  
Email: [info@bowelcancernz.org.nz](mailto:info@bowelcancernz.org.nz)  
Website: [bowelcancernz.org.nz](https://www.bowelcancernz.org.nz)

