



Ngā mōhiohio tātari i te mate pukupuku whēkau

Bowel screening information

A guide for communities in Aotearoa.



At a glance...

- The government-run National Bowel Screening Programme (NBSP) is free for eligible men and women aged 60-74 every two years.
- Screening is for people who do not have obvious symptoms of bowel cancer.
- If you don't qualify for the NBSP, please see your GP about the screening options available to you.

“Screening is one of the best ways to reduce bowel cancer in our community: firstly, to have polyps removed before they become cancerous, and secondly, to have any cancer identified early.”

DR SUE CRENGLE,
GP AND PROFESSOR

Why bowel screening is so important

Bowel cancer can develop without any warning signs, but 90% of cases can be treated successfully if caught early. Screening is one of the most effective ways to find bowel cancer early before it spreads.

What does bowel screening involve?

The screening test is called a 'Faecal Immunochemical Test' (FIT), and it checks for tiny traces of blood in your bowel motion (stool), not for bowel cancer itself. Blood can leak from pre-cancerous polyps or early-stage bowel cancer and pass into bowel movements before any other bowel cancer symptoms become apparent. The test is clean, quick and simple to do. You do it by yourself at home.

Don't wait to do a screening test if you are experiencing any bowel cancer symptoms. See your GP straight away.

These include bleeding from the bottom, a change of bowel habits, abdominal pain, anaemia, a lump or mass in the abdomen, or tiredness and weight loss for no reason.

You should not take part in bowel screening if you:

- Have any symptoms of bowel cancer.
- Have had a colonoscopy within the last five years.
- Are on a bowel polyp or bowel cancer surveillance programme.
- Have had, or are currently being treated for, bowel cancer.
- Have had your large bowel removed.
- Have ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease that is currently active.
- Are seeing your doctor about bowel problems.



Want to know more?

You'll find detailed information about bowel screening here:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > About bowel cancer
> Early detection and prevention > Screening



Helpful tip

If you're unsure whether you're eligible for the National Bowel Screening Programme, check the website timetoscreen.nz or freephone 0800 924 432.



NEED SUPPORT?

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

Join our private Facebook group:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > Support > Finding Support

CONTACT US

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