



Bowel Cancer
NEW ZEALAND

Bowel Cancer NZ screening information sheet

There is a free National Bowel Screening Programme (NBSP) for men and women aged 60 to 74, which is currently being rolled out across New Zealand. In some parts of New Zealand, this is well established. In others, it is yet to start. Screening saves lives by detecting bowel cancer early when it can often be successfully treated.

People experiencing symptoms or who have a personal/family history of bowel cancer or polyps are advised to discuss appropriate screening for the disease with their doctor.

For asymptomatic patients concerned about their risk of bowel cancer, screening using a faecal immunochemical test (FIT) every two years from age 50 is of use. If you have one relative diagnosed with bowel cancer at age 55 or older, screening should be considered every two years from age 45.

At-home bowel screening involves a test that looks for very small amounts of blood in your bowel motion that is non-visible to the naked eye in people who do not have any obvious symptoms of bowel cancer.

Screening using a faecal immunochemical test is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of dying from bowel cancer. The test can detect blood in your bowel motion which may have been caused by pre-cancerous polyps or from early-stage bowel cancer.

When identified early, more than 90% of bowel cancer cases can be successfully treated.

The faecal immunochemical test involves collecting toilet water or poo samples, placing them on a card or in a container, and mailing them to a pathology laboratory for analysis. The results are then sent back to you and your GP.

To find what a positive or negative test may mean and for more information, click here.

<https://bowelcancernz.org.nz/about-bowel-cancer/early-detection-and-prevention/screening/>