

Me mōhio ki ngā āhuatanga mōrea
mō te mate pukupuku whēkau

Know the risk factors for bowel cancer

A guide for communities in Aotearoa.



At a glance...

- Your risk of developing bowel (colon and rectal) cancer depends on many things, including your age, genetics and lifestyle.
- Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly can help reduce the risk of bowel cancer.
- Ways to lower your risk of bowel cancer can be found under Prevention in the About Bowel Cancer section on our website.

“Most bowel cancer is sporadic, not inherited. In fact, less than 10% of bowel cancer is associated with an inherited genetic predisposition, so the way you live does have an impact.”

PROFESSOR FRANK FRIZELLE,
BOWEL CANCER SPECIALIST

What are the risk factors?

Certain factors can influence your risk of bowel cancer. These include:

- Increasing age, being 50+ years in age.
- A personal or family history of bowel cancer and polyps.
- A diet high in red meat and/or processed meats and animal fats.
- A low fibre, high-fat diet.
- Lack of exercise.

- Obesity or being overweight.
- Smoking and alcohol.
- Genetic factors associated with bowel cancer such as Lynch syndrome.
- Inflammatory bowel disease (includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis).
- Diabetes.

Having one or more risk factors doesn't mean you will get bowel cancer. While no cancer is completely preventable, you can lower your risk of bowel cancer by eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly.



Want to know more?

You can find more detailed information and a risk factor calculator on our website:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > About bowel cancer > Early detection and prevention > Risk factors



Helpful tip

If you have one or more of the risk factors listed above and are concerned about bowel cancer, please see your GP.



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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