

Bowel Screening Conversation Guide

This document is intended to support conversations you may have with people about bowel screening.



Key messages

1. Be aware of symptoms of bowel cancer.
2. Early detection saves lives.



What is bowel screening?

The NHS Bowel Screening Programme is a free check, looking for early symptoms of bowel cancer that would otherwise go unnoticed.



Who is sent a bowel screening test?

- People aged 50-74 years are eligible.
- Test kits are delivered by post to people's home address about one month after their birthday. They will get a kit every 2 years until their 74th birthday.
- Anyone currently aged 51, 53, 55, 57 and 59 will have to wait until their next birthday to receive their kit.



Check your details are up to date

Make sure your GP practice has your correct address so your kit is posted to the right place.



Any concerns or if people want to know exact date on when they will receive their kits, then they should call the free Bowel screening helpline on 0800 707 6060 for information and advice.



Why is it important to talk about this?

In Manchester, fewer people in certain groups are taking part in bowel screening. These groups include men, people living in deprived or more ethnically diverse areas, younger people getting screened for the first time (ages 50 to 60), and people with learning disabilities.



Facts and Figures

- 9 out of 10 people survive bowel cancer if it is found early
- Uptake in some parts of Manchester can be as low as 30%
- Men have a higher chance of getting bowel cancer and are less likely to take part in screening.



What are the symptoms of bowel cancer?

Bowel cancer can affect anyone, whatever your age, gender, ethnicity or where you live.

Symptoms can include:

- bleeding from your bottom
- blood in your poo
- a change in your pooing habits. You might be going more or less often, or have diarrhoea or constipation that might come and go
- losing weight but you're not sure why
- feeling very tired all the time but you're not sure why
- a pain or lump in your tummy.

If you have one or more of these symptoms for more than 3 weeks, see your GP.

Having these symptoms doesn't always mean you have bowel cancer, but it's still important to find out what's causing them.

Find out more about bowel cancer symptoms at:

www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/symptoms

For more information and useful resources in different languages and formats, visit: www.manchesterlco.org/bowel-screening