

# Bowel cancer screening: having a colonoscopy

An easy guide



Call the Freephone helpline for advice: **0800 707 60 60**

## Contents: what is in this booklet

## Page

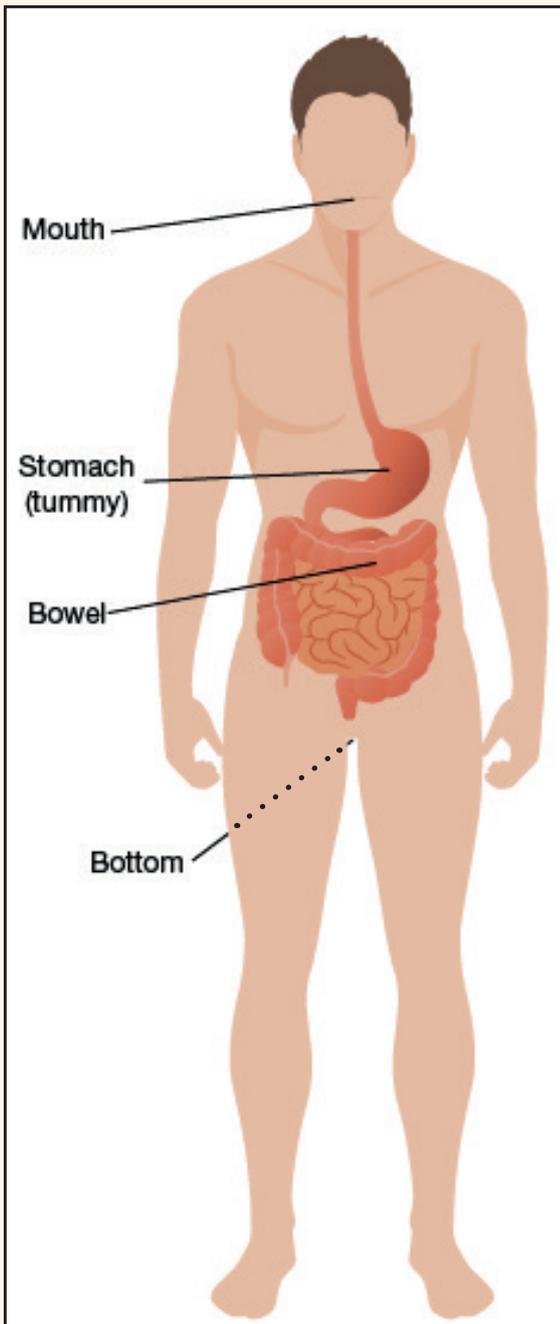
	About this leaflet	3
	Colonoscopy test	4
	Your appointment	6
	Your choice	7
	Before the test	8
	On the day of the test	9
	After the test	13
	Test results	15
	How to stay healthy	17
	When you should see your doctor	21
	More information	22



This booklet tells you about a test called a colonoscopy.

We think you may need a colonoscopy.

This is because we found blood in your poo when you did the bowel cancer screening test.



A colonoscopy looks inside your bowel.

Your bowel is inside your body.

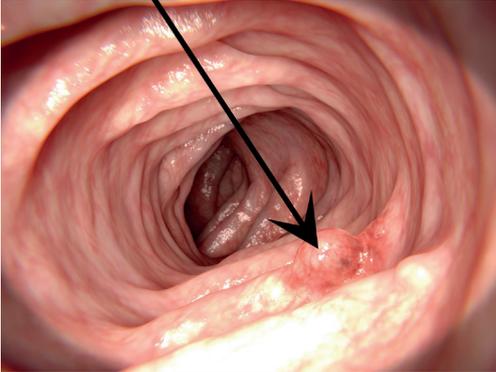
It connects your stomach (tummy) to your bottom.

The bowel takes away waste your body does not need.

This is called poo.

A colonoscopy can help find bowel cancer. Bowel cancer is a serious illness you can die from.

Small lump (polyp)



A colonoscopy can help find small lumps called polyps inside your bowel.

These lumps can grow and become cancer.

We can find and remove lumps. This means you are less likely to get bowel cancer.



A colonoscopy usually takes place in a hospital.

An expert called a colonoscopist uses a thin, bendy tube with a small camera on the end. They use it to see the inside of your bowel.



2 hours

The colonoscopy usually takes 30 to 45 minutes. The whole appointment may take around 2 hours.

# Your appointment

6



We will offer you an appointment with an expert called a specialist screening practitioner.

They will talk to you about the colonoscopy and answer any questions you have.



The specialist screening practitioner will work with you to decide if you can have a colonoscopy.

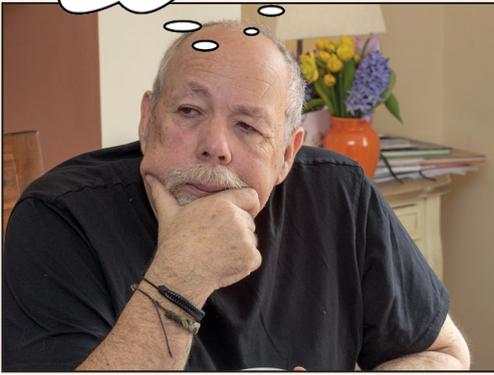
We may offer you a different test if you can not have a colonoscopy.

## Your choice

7

YES

NO



It is your choice to have a colonoscopy or not.

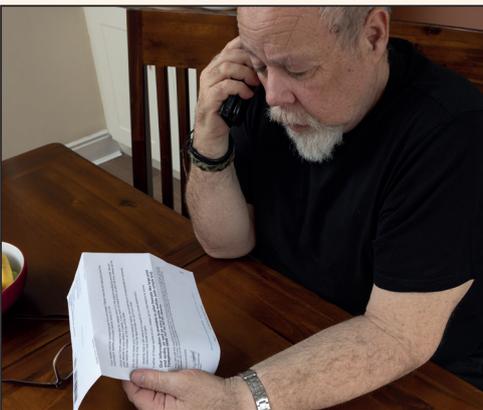
In rare cases colonoscopy can harm the bowel.



You can talk to your family or carer about colonoscopy.

You can also talk to a nurse or your doctor.

Or you can call the freephone number on **0800 707 60 60**.

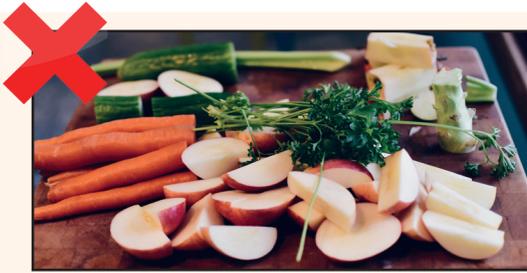


If you chose to have a colonoscopy we will give you an appointment.

If you need any extra help please discuss with the specialist screening practitioner or call the freephone number on **0800 707 6060**

## Before the test

8



We may give you a list of foods that you should not eat in the days before the colonoscopy.



These foods may include fruit and vegetables, brown bread and brown rice.



We will give you a special medicine to take before the scan.

You add it to water and then drink it. It makes you need to go to the toilet to do a poo.

This is so the nurse or doctor can see inside your bowel.



The medicine will make your poo more runny than normal.

It is a good idea to stay near a toilet soon after drinking the medicine.

# On the day of the test

9



It might help to bring a friend or a carer.

You will need someone to take you home after your colonoscopy.



A nurse will call your name.

They will stay with you during your appointment.

They will take you to a room to talk to you.



They will explain what will happen, answer any questions and listen to any concerns.



A nurse will put a wristband on you. This will have your name and date of birth on it.



A nurse will take you to a changing room.

They will ask you to put on a hospital gown.

You will need to take off your trousers or skirt and your underwear.



The nurse will take you to the test room.

This is where the colonoscopy will happen.

There will be other nurses or doctors in the room.



They will ask you to lie on your left side with your knees slightly bent.

They may give you an injection to relax you.

They will move your gown so the doctor or nurse can see your bottom.

Nobody else will see your bottom.



The doctor or nurse doing the test will place a thin bendy tube into your bottom. This may feel uncomfortable.

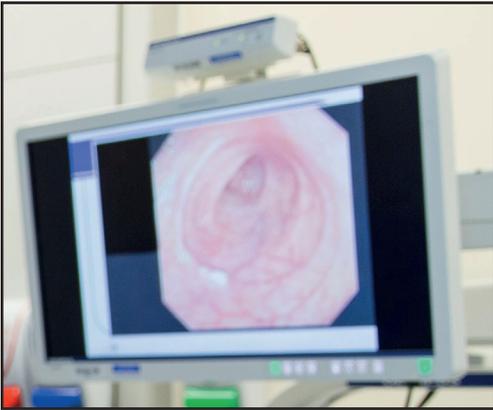
Most people do not find this painful.



They will gently pump some air inside your bottom.

This helps them to see inside your bowel.

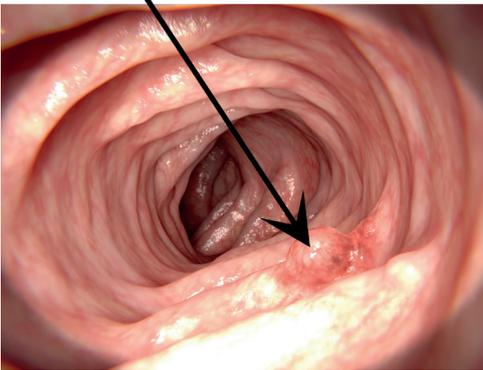
You may feel that you need to pass wind (fart).



They will see the inside of your bowel on a computer screen.

You can also see the screen if you want.

Small lump (polyp)



If they find any small lumps (polyps), they will usually remove them during the test.

This does not usually hurt.

## After the test



When the colonoscopy is finished they will remove the tube from your bottom.

The doctor or nurse will talk to you about your results.



A nurse will take you through to the recovery room where you can rest after the test.



It is normal to feel bloated or full after the test.

After your rest time you can put your clothes back on.



Sometimes there is bleeding from your bottom after the test. This does not happen very often.



If you are worried about anything you should speak to your carer or the specialist screening practitioner.

After the test the nurse will talk to you about your results. There are 4 possible results.



### **No polyps or cancer found**

This result means we did not see any polyps or cancer and you do not need any more tests.

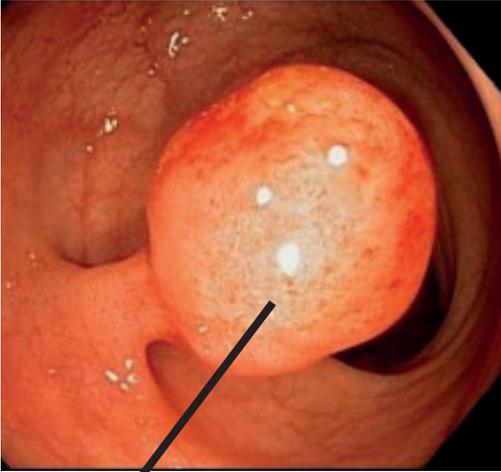
We will send you a new bowel cancer screening kit in 2 years' time if you are still under 75 years old.



### **Polyps found but no more treatment needed**

This result means we found some small polyps but you do not need another appointment.

We will send you a new bowel cancer screening kit in 2 years' time if you are still under 75 years old.



**Polyp**

## **Polyps that need removing**

This result means we found polyps that we have removed or need to be removed.

The nurse will tell you if you need another appointment to remove the polyps. The polyps then need to be looked at by an expert.



## **Bowel cancer found**

If bowel cancer is found, we will arrange for you to see a cancer expert as soon as possible.

Treatment is usually successful if bowel cancer is found early.

# How to stay healthy

17

Having a healthy bowel can help prevent cancer.



Eat 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables every day.

Eat food high in fibre. This includes:



- brown bread



- brown rice



- porridge



Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day.



Be a healthy weight.



Do more exercise.

Some foods are not good for your bowel if you eat **a lot** of them. They include:



- ham



- bacon



- burgers



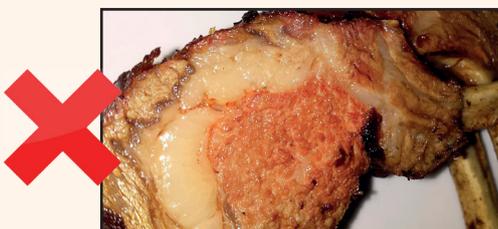
- sausages



- beef



- pork



- lamb



Drinking **a lot** of alcohol is bad for your bowel.



Smoking is bad for your bowel.

# When you should go to your doctor

21

You should go to your doctor if:



- you see blood in your poo
- your poo is runny for at least 3 weeks and this is not normal for you



- you stop having a poo and this is not normal for you
- you start to get very bad tummy pains



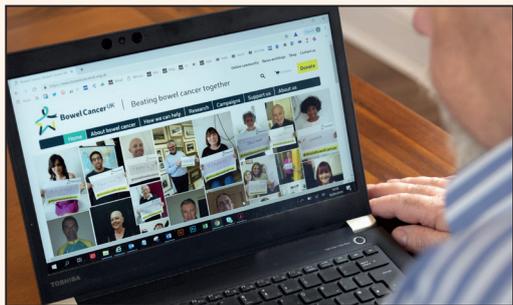
- you can feel lumps in your tummy
- you lose weight quickly without trying to
- you feel tired **all the time** and this is not normal for you



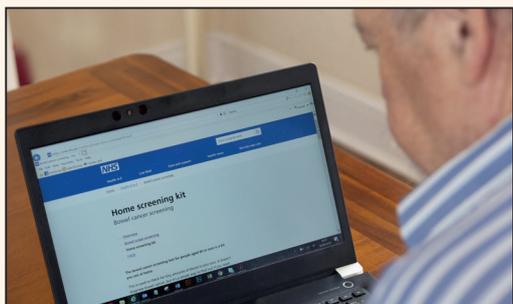
- call **0800 707 60 60**



- book to see your doctor



- visit **[www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)**



- visit **[www.nhs.uk/bowel](http://www.nhs.uk/bowel)**