

Bowel cancer risk assessment:

low moderate risk

This leaflet is for men and women with a **low moderate risk** of bowel cancer (following a family history risk assessment).

It gives information on how common bowel cancer is, screening and what to look out for. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor, genetic counsellor or nurse caring for you.

Contact details

Clinic telephone number: _____

Seen in clinic by: _____

Date of risk assessment: _____

What is a low moderate risk of bowel cancer?

Bowel cancer is a common disease. In the general population about 1 in 16 men and 1 in 20 women in the UK will develop bowel cancer.

Although bowel cancer is common, having an inherited tendency to developing bowel cancer is quite rare. Only about 5-10% of all bowel cancers happen because of an inherited tendency (also called a genetic predisposition).

A low moderate risk of bowel cancer means that your risk of developing bowel cancer is estimated to be about the same as for any one else in the general population.

People with a low moderate risk of developing bowel cancer are unlikely to have an inherited tendency to developing bowel cancer.

Do people with a low moderate risk of bowel cancer need screening?

Depending on your age and family history you may be offered bowel screening to check for changes in the bowel. This type of screening is known as a colonoscopy.

Also, the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers screening to people from 60-69 years. More details can be found at

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel or call 0800 707 60 60. If you require follow up appointments for bowel colonoscopy, your GP will need to refer you each time.

Diet and lifestyle

Research suggests that diet and lifestyle choices can contribute to bowel cancer risk. Cutting down on red meat, smoking and alcohol may help, along with eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, and exercising regularly.

What should I look out for?

There are a few things to look out for which can help with the early detection of bowel cancer:

- bleeding from the back passage other than from haemorrhoids (piles)
- change in toilet habits (for example, persistent diarrhoea/constipation)
- feeling of incomplete emptying of the bowel
- pain or discomfort in your abdomen.

If you experience any of these problems, do not panic. These symptoms can have a number of causes that are not related to cancer. If your symptoms last for two weeks or more, please tell your GP.

What if my family history of cancer changes?

Please let us know and we will see if this changes your risk assessment.

Can I have a test to find out if the bowel cancer in my family is inherited?

Testing for an inherited tendency is available in some families. This depends on the exact details of your family tree and whether the necessary cancer tissue or blood samples are available.

Patients may attend a nurse-led family history clinic and then be referred to the genetics clinic to discuss testing. If you are seen in the genetics clinic we will explain the options available. If any testing does go ahead this could alter your risk assessment and screening recommendations.

Useful contacts

Beating Bowel Cancer

t: 08450 719 301 **www.beatingbowelcancer.org.uk**

Macmillan Cancer Support

t: 0808 808 0000 **www.macmillan.org.uk**

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics.

Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

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