

GUT INSTINCT

BOWEL CANCER:
REDUCING YOUR RISK



New cases per year

41,581

Male

23,171



Female

18,410



Total number of deaths per year

16,187

(Most recent figures available at time of publication)

About bowel cancer

Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in the western world. It is the second biggest cancer killer in the UK, with 16,000 deaths from the disease every year.

Diet is the single biggest factor influencing the development of preventable colon cancers - too much red and processed meat, such as smoked products and sausages, and not enough dietary fibre (found in fruit, leafy vegetables, whole grains and pulses).

Research has also indicated that non-smokers, those who drink little or no alcohol, people who eat fish regularly and those who take regular exercise all have a much lower incidence.

What you can do to reduce your risk

There are no guarantees but doing the right things for your body is going to give you the best chance of avoiding bowel cancer altogether. Making a few simple changes to your lifestyle could make all the difference:

Diet - avoid or limit the amount of processed red meat (bacon, sausages, salami etc) you eat, increase your dietary fibre (fruit, leafy vegetables, whole grains), eat more fish.

Exercise regularly, ideally a minimum of 20 minutes a day. Vigorous housework, gardening and dog walking all count!

Over 60? Taking part in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme gives you the best chance of early diagnosis and successful treatment.

Support our fight against bowel cancer:

If you have a **family history** of bowel cancer, particularly when it has affected a parent or sibling, you may be at increased risk so be aware of the symptoms*.

GUTS provides screening through the **Colorectal Cancer Family Clinic** for those who have a family history of bowel cancer but are not within the age range for the national screening programme - get in touch to find out more.

* See our Signs and Symptoms booklet

An estimated 54% of bowel cancers in the UK are linked to lifestyle factors of which the most common are:



21%

MEAT
CONSUMPTION



13%

OVERWEIGHT
AND OBESITY



12%

ALCOHOL



8%

SMOKING

make a donation at www.gutsfbc.co.uk

Screening

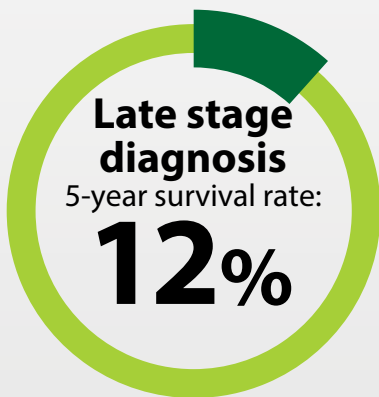
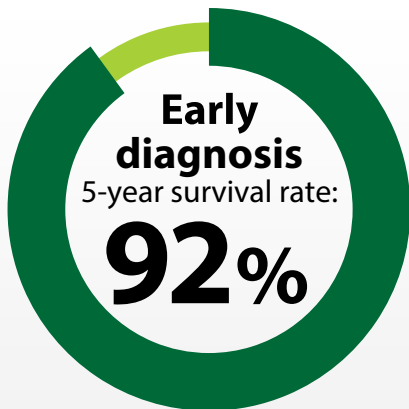
44% of bowel cancers diagnosed are in people aged 75+ so taking part in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme when invited is the best way of ensuring any problems are detected at an early stage, when treatment is more effective and less invasive.

Screening works – we know that taking part reduces the risk of dying from bowel cancer. The programme offers screening **every two years** to those aged **between 60 and 74**; you will automatically be invited to complete a test kit (sent to you through the post) soon after your 60th birthday. It's a simple test and we strongly urge you to take part – it really could be a life saver.

You may also be offered the chance to have a **colonoscopy at age 55**. This examination will pick up any abnormalities or conditions that might lead to cancer or increase your risk – please do take advantage it.

If you have any questions about the screening programme, www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel is a useful source and you are welcome to call the GUTS office for information.

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