

What is Bowel Cancer?

Bowel cancer usually affects the large bowel (colon) or the back passage (rectum) and it happens when the cells that line the bowel change over a period of time and grow in an abnormal way. This leads to the development of a lump or an ulcer which can cause rectal bleeding or a change in the way in which the bowel functions.

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Guernsey, after breast and prostate cancers, with approximately 40 to 45 new cases each year. But the good news is that, if detected early enough, over 90% of those diagnosed with early stage bowel cancer are successfully treated.

Quite simply, a trip to your doctor's surgery could save your life.

“The key to cure is early detection. We must all be aware of the symptoms.”

Dr Peter Gomes, Consultant Oncologist,
Guernsey Medical Specialist Group

For more information

Guernsey

Contact your doctor

Contact the Health Promotion Unit

- Telephone 01481 707311
- www.gov.gg/healthpromotion

United Kingdom

Bowel Cancer UK

- Freephone 0800 8403540
- www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

Bowel Cancer Information

- Helpline 0870 2424870
- www.bowelcancer.tv

Other UK Websites

www.nhs.uk/bowelcancer
www.cruk.org/cancerhelp

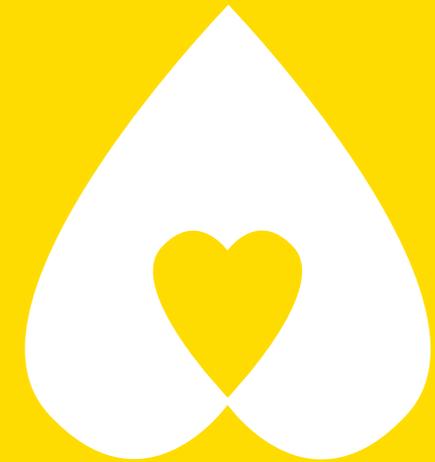
Or contact us at

- info@bowelcancerguernsey.org.gg
- Telephone 01481 722493

For further information on the work of the charity, including how you can help support, please visit:

www.bowelcancerguernsey.org.gg

Bowel Cancer Guernsey is a Guernsey registered charity number 247



Bowel Cancer Guernsey

www.bowelcancerguernsey.org.gg

Your questions answered

So what are the Symptoms?

Most people with these symptoms do not have cancer but, if you have any of those listed below, you should ask advice from your GP.

See your doctor straight away if you have had blood in your poo or looser poo for the last three weeks.

The commonest symptoms are change of bowel habit, for example:

- A recent persistent change which lasts for a few weeks without returning to normal
- Looser, more diarrhoea-like motions
- Trying to go or going to the loo several more times a day than normal
- Rectal bleeding - piles are the main cause but they usually have other symptoms like straining, sore bottom, lumps and itching
- Bleeding from the back passage persistently without any of these symptoms **must** be investigated.

Other Warning Symptoms

- Feeling more tired than usual for some time
- Unexplained anaemia found by your GP
- A lump or mass in your tummy felt by your GP
- Persistent colicky, severe abdominal pain which has come on recently for the first time, particularly if you are in an older age group
- Losing weight for no obvious reason
- Some families have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer. If one or more of your close relatives have developed bowel cancer at an early age, you should seek advice from your GP.

How can you reduce the risk?

- **Attend the bowel screening** when invited. You should be invited to attend the Princess Elizabeth Hospital for screening in the year you reach your 60th birthday. If you haven't been contacted then see your GP
- **Eat lots of fibre**, which means at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day and include wholemeal bread and jacket potatoes in your diet. Research shows that a varied diet, high in fibre and fresh vegetables may help to protect you against bowel cancer
- **Be as active as possible.** Research has suggested that inactive people have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer
- **Limit your intake of red meat** such as beef, pork and lamb to less than 500g cooked weight (750g raw weight) per week
- Try to **avoid processed meats** such as bacon, ham, salami and corned beef and eat more fish instead
- **Maintain a sensible weight**
- **Don't be embarrassed!** Some people find it difficult to talk about their bowels and some just hope that any problems will go away. But don't let embarrassment stop you going to see your GP. Remember that the symptoms are unlikely to be due to bowel cancer but it is important to discuss them with your doctor
- **Cut down on alcohol** because by drinking less you will reduce your health risks
- **Stop smoking.** Call Quitline on 01481 233170.

The aim of Bowel Cancer Guernsey is to improve the awareness, prevention and diagnosis of bowel cancer within the Bailiwick of Guernsey. All funds raised are used locally.