



BE BOWEL CANCER AWARE

With over 41,000 bowel cancer diagnoses a year in the UK, the equivalent to one person every 15 minutes,* there is a great need to ensure both men and women are bowel cancer aware. This means knowing the associated risk factors and the signs and symptoms for that crucial early diagnosis.

Our specialist team of Gastroenterologists, Colorectal Surgeons and Specialist Oncologists have put together this guide with everything you need to know to help you become more bowel cancer aware.

1. WHY BE BOWEL CANCER AWARE?

Bowel cancer affects both men and women and although it is the 4th most common cancer in the UK, it is the 2nd biggest cancer killer.* So being bowel aware is crucial.



A man in the UK has a **1 in 14** risk of developing bowel cancer.*



A woman in the UK has a **1 in 19** risk of developing bowel cancer.*



In the UK someone dies of bowel cancer every **30 minutes**. Knowing the **signs and symptoms** for an early diagnosis is **crucial**.

*Cancer Research UK [cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/bowelcancer#heading-Zero](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/bowelcancer#heading-Zero). Accessed March 2017

2. WHAT IS BOWEL CANCER?

The bowel is part of the digestive system. The digestive system processes the food we eat turning it into energy and removing any solid waste matter the body doesn't need. After swallowing your food, it passes down the oesophagus into your stomach. Digestion begins in the stomach before continuing in the small bowel where the body absorbs nutrients from the food. The digested food then moves into the large bowel.

Bowel cancer refers to cancer that starts in the colon (large bowel) or rectum (back passage). It is also known as colorectal cancer. Most bowel cancers begin as a small growth called a polyp or adenoma. If left untreated, they may become cancerous.

BMI Healthcare working with:



3. WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BOWEL CANCER?*

- A persistent change in bowel habits, especially going more often or looser stools
- Bleeding from the back passage (rectum) or blood in your stools
- A lump that your doctor can feel in your back passage or abdomen (more commonly on the right side)
- A feeling of needing to strain in your back passage (as if you need to pass a bowel motion), even after opening your bowels
- Unexplained weight-loss or tiredness
- Pain in your abdomen or back passage
- A lower than normal level of red blood cells (anaemia)

If any of the above symptoms persist for 3 weeks of more they should not be ignored.



BMI Healthcare is committed to raising bowel cancer awareness throughout the UK and that's why we are working with

the charity Beating Bowel Cancer.

“ If bowel cancer hits, it can be hard to know where to turn and it's natural to have lots of questions and concerns. That's where Beating Bowel Cancer comes in. We're the support and campaigning charity for everyone affected by bowel cancer. We run the UK's only nurse-led specialist helpline for bowel cancer, which patients and their families call a 'lifeline'. Whatever your situation, our nurses will always listen and be supportive. We campaign tirelessly to raise public awareness of bowel cancer and ensure Governments and health services provide the highest quality care and treatments.

Take a look at our website for more information on our nurse helpline, accredited publications, a wealth of patient materials and invaluable patient stories. ”

www.beatingbowelcancer.org

Now you know what to look out for, what are the next steps?

- If you are concerned about any symptoms, book an appointment with your GP for a medical opinion and if required, further investigation

If you would like to speak with a specialist please call us on 0800 157 7747.

- Print this guide for possible future reference and email to your partner, mother, father, son, daughter, sister, brother or friend and help make them bowel cancer aware too!

Remember knowing the signs and symptoms is crucial for that early diagnosis.

4. THE FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW!*



70grams

The Government recommended daily maximum allowance of processed and red meat consumption.



12%

Is the increased risk of bowel cancer if you have a lack of fibre in your diet.



Causes cancer

Is the official classification of processed meat consumption.



Is likely to cause cancer

Is the official classification of red meat consumption.**



8,800 fewer cancer cases

A year in the UK if nobody ate processed or red meat.

*Cancer Research UK www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/bowel-cancer/risk-factors. Accessed March 2017 **Although eating a lot of red meat is linked to bowel cancer, it is a good source of nutrients including protein, iron and zinc, so it's fine to include up to 500g a week as part of healthy, balanced diet.

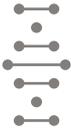
5. WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?*



AGE – Your risk increases with age (but that doesn't mean it can't affect younger men and women).



FAMILY – You are at a greater risk if an immediate family member (parent, child, sibling) has had bowel cancer.



GENE – If you carry the cancer genes HNPCC or BRCA1 you are at greater risk. If you are unsure whether you carry either of the genes but are concerned, you can arrange a screening.



GENDER – Men are at greater risk of developing bowel cancer. However more than 5% of women in the UK will be touched by bowel cancer in their lifetime.



MEDICAL CONDITIONS – If you have type 2 diabetes, ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease you are at a greater risk.



6. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DISCOVER A SYMPTOM?

Remember if you notice any symptoms associated to bowel cancer, it doesn't necessarily mean you have bowel cancer. However if you are concerned you should visit your GP right away who will be able to refer you onto a specialist colorectal consultant if they feel further investigation is required.

Lifestyle risk factors



54% of bowel cancer cases in the UK each year are linked to major lifestyle factors with the below being some of the main risk factors evidenced*:



Red meats including beef, lamb and pork



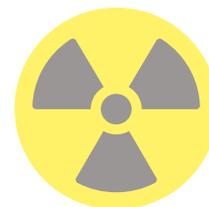
Processed meats including sausages, ham, bacon, chorizo, pepperoni and pancetta



Alcohol



Smoking tobacco



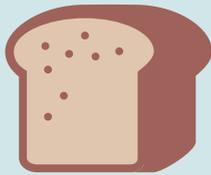
X radiation and Gamma radiation



Inactivity and being overweight

*Cancer Research UK www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/bowel-cancer/risk-factors. Accessed March 2017

7. SO NOW WE KNOW THE RISKS, WHAT ARE THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS?!



Diet

It is difficult to be exact about the true impact of a healthy diet but research indicates that a high consumption of processed and red meats can cause bowel cancer and a high fibre consumption can help protect from bowel cancer.



Being physically active

About 3% of all bowel cancer cases are linked to not doing enough exercise. 30 mins of exercise 5 times a week can help to lower your risk.



Vitamin D

Evidence suggests that people with more vitamin D are at lower risk of developing bowel cancer. You get vitamin D from certain foods and the sun. You don't need to sunbathe to get enough vitamin D. A short time outdoors a few times a week should be enough.

8. THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINE BOWEL SCREENING²

There are 2 types of bowel screening:

The stool test (Faecal Occult Blood Testing) is available to all men and women aged 60-74 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and 50-74 in Scotland, on the NHS bowel cancer screening programme. You will be sent a home test kit every two years through the post, until you reach the age of 74. It simply involves returning a stool sample to be checked for the presence of blood, which could be an early sign of bowel cancer.

Bowel scope screening is offered to men and women at the age of 55 as a one-off test in addition to the stool test. It involves a doctor or nurse using a thin, flexible instrument to look inside the lower part of the bowel, removing any small growths, called polyps, that could eventually turn into cancer.

Screening helps
to detect bowel
cancer early,
or in some
cases before it
develops.

At BMI Healthcare we have 59 private hospitals and clinics across the country, many offering an extensive range of bowel cancer services including:

- Bowel cancer screening for patients wanting to keep on top of their bowel health (asymptomatic) for example those outside of the NHS bowel cancer screening criteria, or those who would like a more regular screening. The screening packages are available on a pay for yourself basis.
- Specialist-led, fast access bowel cancer clinics for patients concerned or presenting symptoms. Our clinics are available to patients with private medical insurance or those paying for themselves.



¹Beating Bowel Cancer
www.beatingbowelcancer.org/understanding-bowel-cancer/about-bowel-cancer/prevention. Accessed March 2017.

²Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/bowel-cancer. Accessed March 2017.

Want to know more?

For more information on bowel cancer awareness or our bowel cancer services call **0800 157 7747** or visit www.bmihealthcare.co.uk/be-bowel-cancer-aware