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Bowel cancer

What you need to know



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bowel cancer

the facts

- Bowel cancer is one of the most common types of cancer
- It is the fourth most common cancer in Ireland
- Also known as colon, rectal or colorectal cancer
- Effects both men and women
- It is more common over the age of 50 but it can occur in younger people
- Free bowel screening is available to people aged 59 - 69.
Register online or freephone 1800 45 45 55

Risks and causes of bowel cancer

Many causes of bowel cancer are unknown, but your risk may be increased with the following:

- **Age:** More common in people over the age of 50
- **Diet:** A diet high in saturated fat and low in fibre increases your risk
- **Family history:** Your risk is higher if at least two family members had bowel cancer at a young age
- **Polyps** (are small growths in the bowel which can increase your risk)
- **Bowel disease** – A history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease for many years increases the risk
- **Smoking** and Alcohol can increase the risk

signs & symptoms

Go to your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Bleeding from your bottom or blood in your poo, blood may be bright red or dark in colour
- A change in normal bowel habits – such as looser poo, pooing more often or constipation for no obvious reason and that lasts for more than 3 weeks
- Weight loss for no obvious reason
- Pain in the abdomen (stomach) or rectum (back passage)
- Feeling like you haven't fully emptied your bowel after going to the toilet
- If you experience tiredness or breathlessness for no reason

How to reduce your risk of getting bowel cancer

- A diet high in fibre – cereals, beans, fruit and vegetables
- Less fat and sugar in your diet
- Eating more chicken and less red meat
- Less processed meat like bacon, sausage, and ham
- Eating more oily fish – mackerel, salmon and sardines
- Exercise daily. At least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- Drink less alcohol, none at all is better
- Don't smoke – If you would like help to quit smoking,
Freephone 1800 201 203 or Freetext QUIT to 50100

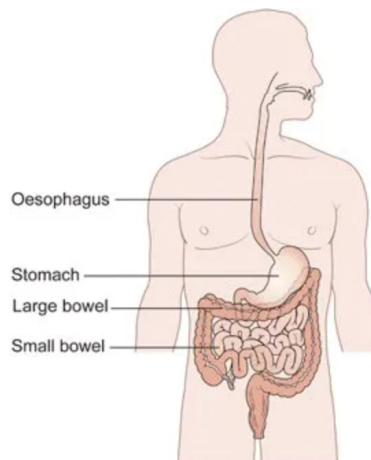


Diagram showing the position of the small bowel
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Important things to remember

- Know what's normal
- Talk to someone if you notice changes
- Keep an eye on any changes you've noticed, and if they don't go away you should talk to your doctor
- If you are 59 - 69 yrs, **register online** (www.bowelscreen.ie) or **freephone 1800 45 45 55** for your free bowel screening