



Public Health
England



NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Bowel scope screening

I've been invited
for NHS bowel
scope screening.

This leaflet gives you
information to help
you choose whether
to have screening.



NHS bowel scope screening is a new test to help prevent bowel cancer. It does this by finding and removing any small growths, called polyps, in the bowel that could eventually turn into cancer.

The NHS offers bowel scope screening to all men and women aged 55.

This leaflet aims to help you make a choice about whether to have bowel scope screening.

It includes information about:

- why the NHS offers bowel scope screening
- what to expect from it
- the possible benefits and risks for you

If you would like a summary of facts and figures about bowel scope screening, please turn to pages 8 and 9.

Why does the NHS offer bowel scope screening?

NHS bowel scope screening helps prevent bowel cancer. For every 300 people screened, it stops 2 from getting bowel cancer and saves 1 life from bowel cancer.

Some health problems mean that it might not be possible for you to have bowel scope screening. For more information, please turn to page 5.

What is bowel cancer?

Bowel cancer is the term used for cancer that begins in the large bowel. It is also called colorectal cancer. Bowel cancer often starts from small growths in the bowel called polyps.

Polyps do not usually cause symptoms but some might turn into bowel cancer if they are not removed.

The bowel, also known as the intestine, helps to digest the food you eat. After food has gone through the bowel, all that is left is poo.

The bowel has two parts – the small bowel and the large bowel. The large bowel is coloured pink in the picture below.

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK. About 1 in every 18 people will get bowel cancer in their lifetime. Both men and women are at risk. Bowel cancer is more common in older people – most people who get it are over the age of 55.

People can be at risk of bowel cancer even when nobody else in the family has had cancer.

