

## Reduce your risk?

- Get to know your normal bowel habits so that you can recognise sudden changes.
- Be aware of your family cancer history.

**The British Society of Gastroenterology guidelines state Moderate to High Risk if at least:**

- three relatives in your family are diagnosed over age of 50 years and over two generations on one side of the family.
- two close relatives in your family diagnosed under the age of 60 years.
- one immediate relative aged less than 45 at diagnosis of bowel cancer.

### **Low to Moderate Risk if:**

- one close relative affected under 50 years.
- two close relatives affected over 60 years.
- Keep to a healthy weight by balancing what you eat with physical activity.
- Eat a diet high in fibre, including at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Limit the amount of red meat you eat to 500g per week and try replacing with poultry, fish or pulses.
- Smoking increases your risk of many cancers including bowel cancer. For free help call 642639 or visit [www.Quit4you.gov.im](http://www.Quit4you.gov.im)
- Drinking too much alcohol may increase the risk of bowel cancer. Know your limits and have at least two alcohol free days every week.

For support and advice call the Alcohol Advisory Service on 627656 or visit:  
[www.motiv8.im/alcohol-advisory-service](http://www.motiv8.im/alcohol-advisory-service)

## Contact

Bowel Cancer Isle of Man - an Isle of Man charity raising awareness and providing support to patients, carers or people affected by Bowel Cancer.

For further information and help visit:  
**[www.bowelcanceriom.com](http://www.bowelcanceriom.com)**

**The information in this document can be provided in large print or on audio tape on request.**

Bowel Cancer Isle of Man  
Company No. 123071C  
Registered Isle of Man Charity 1035



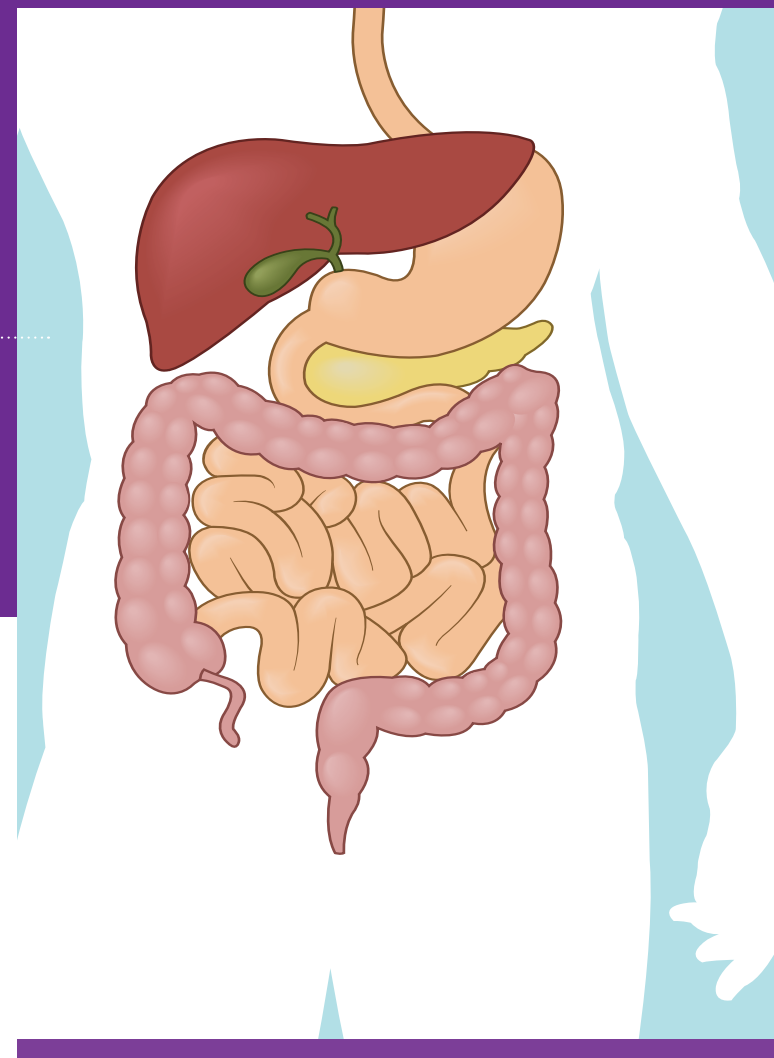
**Isle of Man**  
Government  
*Reillys Ellan Vannin*

Public Health Directorate • Cronk Coar • Noble's Hospital  
Strang • Douglas • Isle of Man • IM4 4RJ  
email: [publichealth@gov.im](mailto:publichealth@gov.im)  
web: [www.gov.im/publichealth](http://www.gov.im/publichealth)

Ref CAN8a 10-Jun-2014

# Bowel Cancer

## Reduce your Risk



Bowel Cancer

**BOWEL CANCER**  
ISLE OF MAN  
[www.bowelcanceriom.com](http://www.bowelcanceriom.com)

## What is Bowel Cancer?

In England and the Isle of Man, bowel cancer is the third most common type of cancer.

Approximately 72% of bowel cancer cases develop in people who are 65 or over. Two-thirds of bowel cancers develop in the colon, with the remaining third developing in the rectum.

492 patients were admitted to Noble's with a diagnosis of bowel cancer between 2008 and 2014. Sixteen of the diagnosed cases were detected through the bowel screening programme which commenced in July 2011.

Bowel screening aims to detect bowel cancer and bowel polyps which can become cancerous at an early stage, before people experience any symptoms when treatment is more effective. If diagnosed early, bowel cancer is highly treatable; however not all bowel cancers are detected early and some are diagnosed too late.

## Who is at risk of developing Bowel Cancer?

- Both men and women are at risk of developing bowel cancer.
- Your risk of developing bowel cancer increases with age. Eight out of 10 people who are diagnosed with bowel cancer are over 60.
- In about 25% of cases of bowel cancer diagnosed in the UK there is a family history. In general, the more members of a family affected by bowel cancer and/or the younger they were at diagnosis, the greater the chance of a family link. (For more information please refer to Reduce Your Risk).

- People who take little exercise, people who are overweight, and people who have a diet high in red meat and low in vegetables, fruits and fibre are all thought to have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer.

## Common Symptoms?

- A change in your normal bowel habit lasting four to six weeks or more.
- Going to the toilet more often or experiencing looser stools.
- Unexpected constipation and a feeling of fullness in the rectum (back passage).
- Bleeding from the bottom (rectal bleeding).
- Constant unexplained pain anywhere in the abdomen, especially if severe. It may also be linked with going to the toilet, or it might come and go like colic.
- An unexpected lump in your tummy.
- Unexpected weight loss, perhaps due to loss of appetite, or feeling bloated or sick.
- Unexplained tiredness, which is a symptom of anaemia.

If you have persistent symptoms seek immediate advice whatever your age.

Most people with these symptoms do not have bowel cancer, but your GP will want to examine you and may do further tests to rule it out.

*Don't overlook symptoms - seek further advice especially if your bowel symptoms persist.*

## What else could it be?

Your symptoms could be caused by other common conditions that can easily be treated and managed by your GP:

- Piles or hemorrhoids
- Anal fissures
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and diverticular disease.

Some of these diseases can also put you more at risk of developing bowel cancer and you should talk to your GP about being monitored regularly.

## Causes of Bowel Cancer?

Cancer is the name for cells that are growing out of control. Cells grow and divide regularly in a normal healthy body. Cells lining the colon and rectum that begin to divide too quickly can result in precancerous growths in your intestinal lining. These growths are called polyps.

The cancer then actually begins when some cells divide haphazardly and out of control and start invading the intestinal wall.

There are many theories and possible explanations for this change, but no one cause has been found.

*Bowel Cancer screening is now available on the Isle of Man, for men and women aged 60-75. People over the age of 75 can request a test kit by calling 0800 707 6060.*