

## What you can do...

- participate in the free National Bowel Cancer Screening Program from age 50 – 74
- eat for health, including limiting red and processed meats, and eating plenty of fibre
- be physically active and maintain a healthy weight
- stop smoking
- avoid alcohol
- see your doctor if you have any symptoms or notice any unusual changes
- see your doctor if you have a family history of bowel cancer, bowel diseases, or genetic disorders

## Further information

National Bowel Cancer Screening Program  
T: 1800 11 88 68  
[cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel](http://cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel)

Cancer Australia  
T: 1800 624 973  
[canceraustralia.gov.au](http://canceraustralia.gov.au)

Cancer Council WA  
[cancerwa.asn.au/bowel-cancer](http://cancerwa.asn.au/bowel-cancer)

# Bowel cancer: A simple test could save your life

Information  
and support



For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, speak to a Cancer Council Nurse on **13 11 20**. Calls are confidential and available statewide Monday to Friday during business hours.

C1742S - 07/2020

**13 11 20**  
Cancer Council

 **Cancer  
Council**  
WA

## What is bowel cancer?

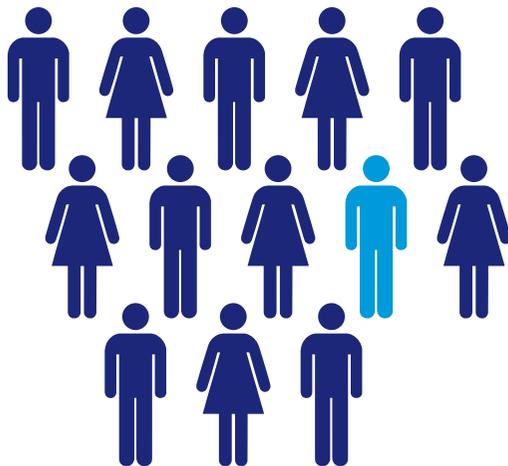
Bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer in Australia and one of the most common cancers affecting Western Australians.

Bowel cancer is cancer in any part of the large bowel (colon or rectum). It is sometimes known as colorectal cancer and might also be called colon cancer or rectal cancer, depending on where it starts.

Bowel cancer usually develops from the growth of abnormal cells called polyps. Polyps are common and in most cases are non-cancerous, however, some can develop into bowel cancer. If polyps are removed, the risk of bowel cancer is greatly reduced.

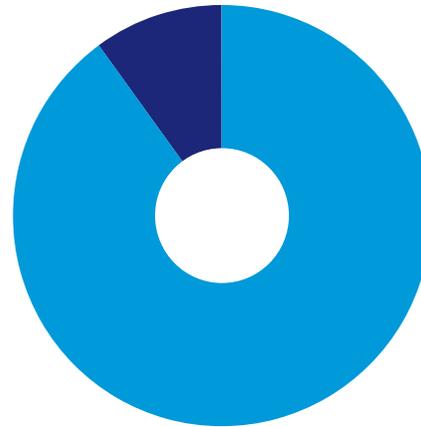
## GET THE FACTS. 1 in 13

Australians will develop  
**bowel cancer**  
in their lifetime.



## When found early, over

**90%** of those diagnosed  
with bowel cancer  
will beat it.



## Who is at risk?

Bowel cancer can occur at any age, but the risk increases with age, and is higher for men and women over 50. Other risk factors include:

- **lifestyle factors:** a diet high in red and processed meats, or low in fibre, being overweight, doing little physical activity, drinking alcohol, or smoking
- **previous history** of bowel cancer or polyps
- **some bowel diseases:** including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease
- **inherited gene disorders:** including Lynch syndrome and Familial Adenomatous Polyposis.
- **strong family history of bowel cancer**

If you're concerned about your risk, see your doctor.

## What are the symptoms of bowel cancer?

**Bowel cancer often occurs without symptoms** but it is important to see your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- blood in your poo
- a change in bowel habit (diarrhoea or constipation) that lasts more than four weeks
- abdominal pain or bloating
- loss of appetite
- unexplained weight loss, tiredness, weakness, or breathlessness

In most cases, the above changes will not be due to bowel cancer but it is important that you discuss them with your doctor.

## Screening for peace of mind

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program sends a free home test kit to Australian men and women aged between 50 to 74 years. It is recommended by CCWA to complete the home test kit when it arrives in your mailbox, as it can help find bowel cancer before you have any symptoms. The home test kit is simple, quick, and convenient! Visit the Program's website [cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel](https://cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel) to see if you are eligible, or call **1800 118 868** to find out more or to order a replacement kit.

<b>positive result</b>	<b>See your doctor for more tests. This does not always mean you have cancer .</b>
<b>negative result</b>	<b>Repeat the test in two years.</b>