

1. I'm within the age range. What do I have to do to take part in the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme?

As long as you are registered with a GP you will automatically be sent your screening invitation through the post so that you can do the screening test at home. All you need to do is make sure that your GP has the correct address details for you. In the meantime, if you have any concern about your bowel health, you should see your GP in the usual way.

2. I have a family history of Bowel Cancer, can I be tested earlier?

Eight out of ten people who get bowel cancer are over the age of sixty so the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is aimed at people aged 60 to 71. If you are concerned about your family history, or risk of developing bowel cancer, or if you have any symptoms you should see your GP in the usual way.

3. I fall outside the age range, can I still have the test?

The target age range for the Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is 60 – 71. Screening is not available to people outside of the age range. If you are worried about possible symptoms of bowel cancer you should contact your GP in the usual way.

4. I'm worried about constipation / diarrhoea - can I have the test?

If you have symptoms or are worried about a change in your bowel habit, then you should see your GP.

5. I'm within the age range and screening has started where I live - why haven't I been invited yet?

Once screening starts, it will take 2 years to invite everyone within your Health and Social Care Trust to participate. To ensure that that you will be invited make sure that your GP has your correct address and details and you will receive your bowel cancer screening invitation and kit in due course. Please note invitations are issued based on your birthday as opposed to age. As always, people worried about possible symptoms shouldn't wait for screening, but should speak to their GP

6. How do I get my screening kit?

If you are in the screening age range of 60-74 you will automatically be sent your screening invitation through the post. All you need to do is make sure that your GP has the correct address details for you.

7. I take care of the toilet needs of an infirm/disable person - can I complete the screening kit for them?

If the person has asked for help, understands the screening process (including colonoscopy), and does not have a medical condition that means they shouldn't be screened, then yes, you can assist them to complete the test kit.

8. I am a carer, looking after someone who lacks the mental capacity to make their own decisions about screening - how should I deal with their invitation?

If the person you care for is unable to make their own decisions about screening, then you, as their carer, should make what is called a 'best interests' decision on their behalf, in the same way as you may be making other decisions about their care and treatment. You will need to weigh up the benefits of screening, the possible harm to them and what you think the person would have wanted to do themselves. Whether you are a paid carer, or an unpaid carer, family member or close friend, the process is the same. You may find it helpful to speak to the persons GP to discuss.

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