

# GUT INSTINCT

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## JUNE IS BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Bowel Cancer affects 1 in 13 Australians in their lifetime and over 15,000 Australians are diagnosed with this cancer each year.

The GOOD NEWS is that if found early, bowel cancer is one of the most treatable cancers.

We encourage everyone to talk about bowel cancer and to be **proactive** about bowel cancer screening.

Let's talk about  
bowel cancer.



It could save your life.



## THE NATIONAL BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

This program invites Australians from the age of 50-74 to perform a FREE bowel cancer screening test kit every 2 years, which you receive in the mail.

Simply follow the instructions in the box, it is quick, clean and easier than you think. This test is for those **WITHOUT SYMPTOMS**. This test can detect tiny traces of blood in the poo, which may not be visible to the naked eye. These tiny traces of blood may come from bowel polyps (a growth of the bowel lining) or bowel cancer. Your results will be sent to your nominated GP.

If your test is **POSITIVE**, it doesn't mean you have cancer or polyps, as there could be another explanation, but it is important to see your doctor to organise a colonoscopy for further investigation. If you have a **NEGATIVE** result, there is no need to follow up with your GP and you can repeat the test in another 2 years time.

If you have any questions about this program, please call 1800 627 701.

## DO YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS?

If you have been experiencing symptoms, such as a persistent change in bowel habit, unexplained abdominal pain, rectal bleeding or weight loss, it is often recommended that you have a colonoscopy rather than do the screening poo test. A colonoscopy is the gold standard for assessing bowel polyps and excluding bowel cancer. Even if you are younger than 50 years, please discuss your symptoms with your doctor.

## DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY HISTORY ?

Some people with a strong family history of bowel cancer are also recommended to have colonoscopy instead of the poo test. You will require a referral from your GP for a colonoscopy.

## LET'S BE PROACTIVE WHEN IT COMES TO OUR BOWEL- HOW?

**TALK TO YOUR GP** if you are concerned about any of the symptoms mentioned or if you have a family history of bowel cancer.

**DON'T IGNORE** the free bowel cancer screening kit from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program when it arrives in the mail. It is important to do it every 2 years from the age 50, if you are well, with no symptoms mentioned above.

### TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR BOWEL CANCER RISK

- ✔ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✔ Keep active
- ✔ Limit your intake of alcohol
- ✔ Quit smoking
- ✔ Eat foods high in dietary fibre
- ✔ Limit red meat & processed meats

## 10 SIMPLE WAYS TO ADD MORE FIBRE TO YOUR DIET



1. Eat the skin on your sweet potato, rather than peel it off
2. Snack on trail mix, a mixture of nuts and dried fruit
3. Add 1/3 cup All Bran to your favourite cereal
4. Switch from white rice to brown rice
5. Add hommus to your sandwich instead of butter
6. Add beetroot to your salads
7. Snack on a bowl of edamame beans
8. Add pureed cauliflower to your mashed potato
9. Switch to whole wheat bread & wholegrain crackers
10. Add a cup of pearl barley to your soups



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