

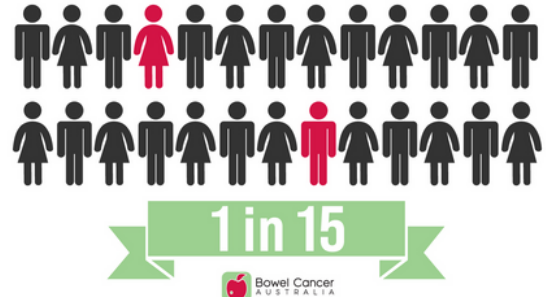
GUT INSTINCT

BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS

June is officially Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, but here at GastroNorth, we could talk about it all day, every day!

Australia has one of the highest bowel cancer rates in the world with 1 in 15 Australians developing this cancer in their lifetime.

As gastroenterologists, we diagnose too many bowel cancer cases and want to do our part in spreading the word about what symptoms to look for, the benefits of screening and the dietary and lifestyle changes we can all make to reduce our risk of developing bowel cancer.



ARE YOU EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS?

- Blood in your poo or rectal bleeding
- A recent and persistent change in bowel habit
- Abdominal pain or swelling
- Pain or a presence of a lump in the anus or rectum
- Unexplained anaemia causing tiredness and/or weakness
- Unexplained weight loss

If your answer is a YES and you've been putting up with the symptom(s) for 2 weeks or more, please make an appointment to see your doctor. **This is regardless of your age.** It could be nothing, but it is always worth getting a check up for peace of mind.

BOWEL CANCER SCREENING SAVES LIVES

Bowel cancer screening can help us find the cancer when there are no other signs. Early detection is key. If found early, bowel cancer is one of the most treatable cancers.

THE POO TEST

This test is for those with NO SYMPTOMS, and looks for tiny traces of blood in your stool which may not be visible to the naked eye. The blood may come from bowel polyps (a growth of the bowel lining) or bowel cancer. It is a quick and simple test that can be done at home. The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program sends out these test kits to all Australians between the ages of 50-79 every two years.



Please don't ignore it, this test could save your life.

If you are younger than 50 and would like to do a bowel cancer screening test, please ask your doctor.

COLONOSCOPY

If your poo test comes back with a positive result, it doesn't mean you have bowel cancer, but your doctor will want to further investigate. During a colonoscopy, your doctor can carefully inspect your bowel and remove some tiny tissue samples for analysis. A colonoscopy is the best test to assess bowel polyps and either exclude or diagnose bowel cancer.

DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY HISTORY ?

Generally speaking, the more members in your family affected by bowel cancer, and the younger they were at diagnosis, the greater the chance of a family link. If you have a family history, please let your doctor know. You will likely be eligible for earlier screening. It's just another way you can be PROACTIVE about your health.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BOWEL CANCER

Bowel cancer rates are rising among young adults in Australia. Discussions around how we can reduce our risk of bowel cancer are important ones for all ages.

- Limit alcohol consumption - bowel cancer risk increases significantly when 2 or more drinks are consumed per day
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Consume a healthy diet rich in whole foods and fibre & dairy
- Limit red meat and avoid processed meats (sausages, ham, bacon, salami)
- Do regular exercise
- Quit smoking
- Do your bowel cancer screening test, talk to your doctor if you have symptoms or a family history of bowel cancer.

DID YOU KNOW?

That every 33 minutes, an Australian is diagnosed with bowel cancer. Let's chat to our friends, family, neighbours and spread awareness of the importance of detecting this cancer early. Remember, this cancer is very treatable if found early!

AI TECHNOLOGY ASSISTING WITH POLYP DETECTION

At Gastronorth we embrace new ways of doing things if it leads to better clinical outcomes for our patients. We are now using computer-aided detection of polyps as an additional tool during colonoscopy. It helps reduce the risk of missing polyps, especially small or flat polyps, or polyps that are difficult to detect.

While these AI systems significantly enhance polyp detection rates, they are not intended to replace the expertise of gastroenterologists who are still required to perform a high quality endoscopy.

