

The Bowel Cancer Journey

This factsheet outlines the possible stages on the diagnosis and treatment pathway for bowel cancer. If you would like more information or have any questions or concerns about any aspect of bowel cancer, please call our **Bowel Cancer Advisory Service on freephone 0800 8 40 35 40**.

GP VISIT

The following examinations may be carried out in the surgery if a person reports symptoms

- Medical & family history check
- Abdominal palpation (feeling the stomach)
- Digital Rectal Examination
- Blood tests

NATIONAL BOWEL SCREENING PROGRAMME

Using Faecal Occult Blood tests (FOBT)

England 60 - 69 year olds (opt-in for 70+)

Scotland 50 – 74 year olds

Wales 60 – 69 year olds (opt-in for 70+)

N. Ireland 60 -69 year olds (to start late 2009)

2 week urgent referral to:
1ST OUTPATIENTS APPOINTMENT OR ONE STOP CLINIC with **Colorectal Surgeon**

If FOBT results positive:
1ST OUTPATIENTS APPOINTMENT with **Colorectal Surgeon**

INVESTIGATIONS

 may include:

- Digital rectal examination
- Abdominal palpation
- Blood tests
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Barium enema
- CT Scan (of liver and lungs)
- MRI scan – particularly with suspected rectal cancer

2ND OUTPATIENTS APPOINTMENT with colorectal surgeon and colorectal nurse specialist to:

- Confirm cancer diagnosis
- Discuss treatment options with input from members of the MDT (Multi Disciplinary Team)



POSSIBLE TREATMENT OPTIONS:

SURGERY

Possibly preceded by:

- Enhanced recovery programme planning

PRE-OPERATIVE CHEMOTHERAPY

Possibly for reducing tumour size prior to surgical removal

PRE-OPERATIVE RADIOTHERAPY

Usually for rectal cancer

PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

Referral for symptom control

Followed by **SURGERY**

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HISTOLOGY report

- Examination of tumour cells and lymph nodes to establish the 'stage' of disease
- Results of histology tests, 10-14 days post surgery and pre-discharge

MDT (Multi Disciplinary Team) MEETING

- To discuss and plan further treatment, if necessary

ADJUVANT CHEMOTHERAPY AND/OR RADIOTHERAPY TREATMENT

- Aim to start within 6-8 weeks of surgery

CONTINUED FOLLOW UP

- May include regular colonoscopy , CT scans, blood tests to monitor CEA (Carcinogen Embryonic Antigen) levels

POSSIBLE FURTHER TREATMENTS

- Further chemotherapy
- Monoclonal Antibodies

Information correct as at date of publication (Sept 2009)

For further information contact the Bowel Cancer Advisory Service on: (Freephone) 0800 8 40 35 40

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