

KNOW THE SIGNS...

- Blood in your bowel motion or bleeding from your back passage
- A lasting change (more than a month) in your normal bowel motion, such as diarrhoea or constipation
- Feeling that you have not emptied your bowel fully after a motion
- Pain or discomfort in your abdomen (tummy) or back passage
- Trapped wind or fullness in your tummy
- Weight loss
- Ongoing general tiredness or weakness

REDUCE THE RISK...

- Have a healthy diet. Limit the amount of red and processed meat that you eat.
- Increase the amount of fibre you eat, including at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- Keep a healthy body weight.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Be aware of your family history. If a member of your family has bowel cancer, speak to your doctor about your risk.

What support do we provide for people who are concerned about bowel cancer?

Anyone who is concerned about bowel cancer can speak with a specialist nurse in confidence by calling the **National Cancer Helpline on Freephone 1800 200 700**. The Helpline is open Monday–Thursday 9am–7pm, Fridays 9am–5pm.

Those who wish to speak to a specialist nurse can also contact us through our

- **Walk-in service** – visit us in person at the Irish Cancer Society offices at 43/45 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
- **Email service** – email us at helpline@irishcancer.ie
- **CancerChat** – chat live on the web with a specialist cancer nurse
- **Message Board** – visit our online bulletin board

Bowel Cancer Support Group

The Irish Cancer Society offers support to people with bowel cancer. This group will enable a person newly diagnosed or living with bowel cancer to meet with and chat to an Irish Cancer Society trained volunteer who is living with bowel cancer (peer support). If you wish to speak to a volunteer, contact the **National Cancer Helpline on Freephone 1800 200 700**. Details of cancer support centres around the country are also available.

Irish Cancer Society
43/45 Northumberland Road
Dublin 4

Tel: 01 2310 500
Fax: 01 2310 555
Email: healthpromotion@irishcancer.ie
www.cancer.ie


irish
cancer
society

Raising Awareness of Bowel Cancer

KNOW THE SIGNS, REDUCE THE RISK



The longer



you leave it



the bigger



the problem.



irish cancer society

Introduction

The Irish Cancer Society is launching a major campaign to increase awareness of bowel cancer signs and symptoms and the importance of early detection. The Society is also encouraging people to learn more about the risk factors for bowel cancer, and what action people can take to reduce their risk of developing this common disease.

This leaflet describes why the Society is raising awareness of bowel cancer and how we plan to do this. We also describe the resources that we can provide to help you deliver our message in your community or workplace.

Why bowel cancer?

Each year, approximately 2,200 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer, and there are 960 deaths from the disease. Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in Ireland after lung cancer. Ireland has one of the highest bowel cancer incidence and mortality rates in Western Europe.

The Irish Cancer Society carried out a national bowel cancer awareness survey of 1,000 people living in Ireland. This survey showed a very worrying lack of knowledge about the early signs and symptoms of bowel cancer and the risk factors for the disease.

The key results showed that:

- One in three people cannot name one sign or symptom of bowel cancer
- One in four people cannot name a single risk factor for bowel cancer.

What do we want to do?

The Society has the following key aims and objectives:

- Raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer
- Encourage people who are concerned about bowel cancer to phone our **National Cancer Helpline on Freephone 1800 200 700**
- Encourage people to make lifestyle changes which can reduce the risk of developing bowel cancer
- Reduce the stigma and the 'embarrassment factor' associated with bowel cancer.

How do we plan to do this?

BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The Irish Cancer Society has designated April as Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. During April we will be conducting an intensive advertising and media campaign to communicate our key messages. While there will be a concentrated focus on bowel cancer during April, our awareness-raising activities will continue throughout the year.

INFORMATION

The following information is available from the Irish Cancer Society to promote awareness of bowel cancer.

Leaflets

- *Bowel cancer – what you should know* contains information on how to spot the symptoms early and information on how to reduce your risk.
- *Reduce your risk of cancer by taking three positive steps* is a simple three-step guide to help people achieve a healthier lifestyle and reduce their risk of developing cancer.

Posters

Eye-catching campaign posters feature the slogan *The longer you leave it, the bigger the problem*, and encourage people to take action if they are concerned about bowel cancer.

To order leaflets and posters on bowel cancer, please contact our Health Promotion Department on 01 2310 539 or email healthpromotion@cancer.ie

Online

Our comprehensive website www.cancer.ie/ **BowelCancer** is updated regularly with all the latest information on bowel cancer and includes patient case

studies. Furthermore, all our publications are available online. Our specialist cancer nurses are also available to chat online and to answer your questions directly by email.

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE HEALTH AWARENESS TALKS

Our health awareness talks are specifically designed to meet the needs of communities and workplaces in relation to raising awareness of bowel cancer prevention, highlighting the importance of early detection, and motivating behaviour change. Our health promotion team can also provide information stands for community events which can be tailored to suit your needs.

If you would like to organise a health awareness talk for your community group or workplace, please contact our Health Promotion Department on 01 2310 539.

TRAINING COMMUNITY WORKERS

Our health promotion team can provide training on cancer prevention and early detection for people who work in any capacity with groups in community settings. For example, this could include women's and men's groups, Traveller groups, disability groups, new communities and ethnic groups or indeed groups within the health service.

If you are interested in receiving training to help us deliver our message to the widest possible audience, please contact our Health Promotion Department on 01 2310 539.

