

Bowel Scope - Frequently Asked Questions

How does the selection process work?

Both men and women, who are registered with a GP, are invited for a one off Bowel Scope when they are 55 years and 2 months old. If you miss your appointment, or due to the roll out process of the programme have not been invited, you can self-refer into the programme any time before your 60th birthday. Once you turn 60 years old you will then move into the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme (BCSP) and will be sent a Faecal Occult Blood test (FOBT)

I've received the invitation letter, what now?

You should receive an information booklet with the invitation letter, which should help you decide if you would like to attend screening. If you decide to attend then call the number on the letter and you will be given an appointment date and time. Two weeks before your appointment you will receive written confirmation of your appointment date and time; with this letter you will also receive your home enema and instructions on how to use it. On the day of your appointment use the enema an hour before you leave home for your appointment, it is important to follow the enema instructions as this is what cleans your bowel, allowing the screener to have a good look. On arrival in the Endoscopy department an Assistant Screening Practitioner (ASP) will be there to support you through the bowel scope screening.

How long does the screening take?

The flexible sigmoidoscopy should take 10-15 minutes to complete, but you should plan to be in the hospital for approximately an hour.

Who will perform the bowel scope flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A specialist accredited nurse endoscopist or doctor. To be able to screen for the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme all nurse endoscopists and doctors must have completed specialist training and a formal assessment process.

What are the risks and benefits of bowel scope screening?

Public Health England have produced an information booklet which discusses the risks and benefits, and this can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bowel-cancer-screening-benefits-and-risks>

What are the possible results and when will I receive them?

There are three potential results from bowel scope screening:

Normal result - which means no polyps or cancers were found. No further follow ups under the Bowel Scope programme, you will receive a FOBT for Bowel Cancer Screening when you turn 60 years old.

Polyps found – if the endoscopist finds any polyps these are normally removed straight away and sent to pathology to be checked, you will be told of this straight away. If a large polyp or multiple

polyps are found you will be offered an additional test called a colonoscopy to examine the rest of the colon. If polyps are sent to pathology these results can take 7 days and a Specialist Screening Practitioner (SSP) will call you with these results.

Cancer found – On rare occasions a cancer is found. Your endoscopist will arrange for you to meet with a specialist. You will be kept updated throughout the whole process and will be given a full overview of the results at the end of your procedure.

I am 60; can I get bowel scope screening?

Bowel scope screening is only available to people aged 55-59 years old. Once you reach your 60th birthday you are offered screening using the bowel cancer screening FOB home test kit.

I have a disability, can I still be screened?

Our aim is to offer screening to as many people as possible, some disabilities make screening difficult to complete, for more information on your personal circumstance please contact one of our specialist nurses on free phone 0800 707 6060.

My father died of bowel cancer in his fifties, can I be tested earlier?

No. If you are under 55 years of age and are concerned about your family history, or risk of developing bowel cancer, you should see your GP.

I have had bowel surgery, do I need bowel screening?

Bowel scope screening is designed to check the health of your lower colon. If you have had bowel surgery or are unsure if bowel scope screening is relevant to you please ring free phone 0800 707 6060 for advice.