



save  
lives



# BOWEL HEALTH AND SCREENING

A resource for people with learning disabilities

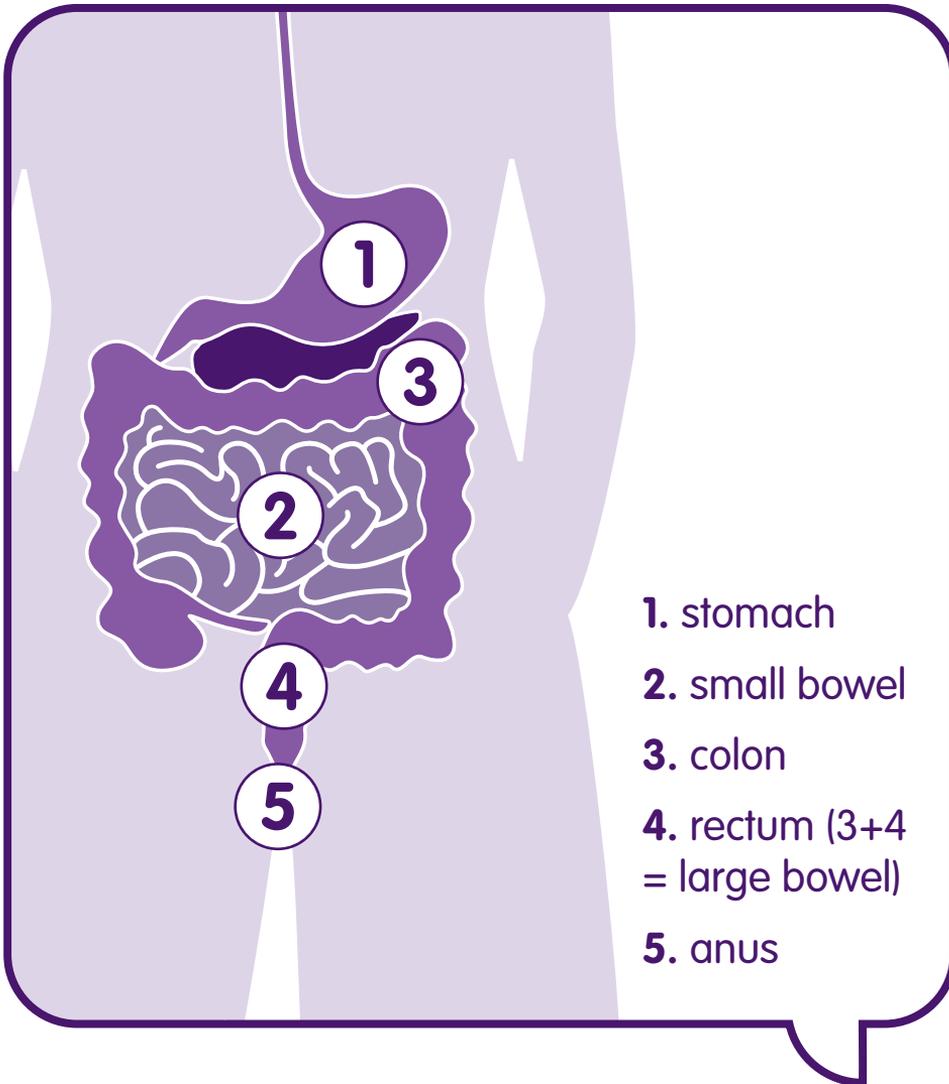


**This leaflet is  
to help you  
make informed  
choices about  
your bowel  
health and the  
bowel screening  
programme.**

# About your bowels

## What does your bowel do?

Your bowel takes the goodness from your food and returns it to your body. The waste that comes from food then passes through the bowel. This comes out as poo.



## Where is your bowel?

It is between your stomach and your bottom.

## Is my bowel healthy?

You should go to the doctor if:

- You are bleeding from your bottom
- You have blood in your poo
- Your poo is loose. Or it goes from being loose to hard
- You have started to get very bad tummy pains
- Your tummy pains happen after eating
- You have lost a lot of weight without trying
- You are very pale and tired a lot of the time

**It does not mean that you have bowel cancer if you have any of the problems on the list. It is good to check with your doctor if you have any of the problems.**

## How do I keep my bowel healthy?



At every age it is important to take care of your bowels. Things you can do to help this are:

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day
- Eat 5 pieces of fruit or vegetables every day
- Eating fibre is good for your bowel for example brown bread and beans
- Eating too much red meat is not good for your bowel
- Smoking is not good for your bowel
- Exercise is good for you and your bowel
- If you are finding it difficult to poo exercise can help you go to the toilet
- Drinking a lot of alcohol can be bad for your bowel

Between the ages of 50 and 74 participating in the bowel screening programme as well as regularly checking for signs and symptoms also supports you to take care of your bowel health.

## What is bowel screening?

Bowel screening lets us take a look at your poo. We can tell if your bowel is healthy by looking at your poo.

## Who needs to do bowel screening?

- You
- Everyone aged between 50 and 74 years old
- Every 2 years



## Why should I do bowel screening?

People can get a disease in their bowel called bowel cancer.

In Scotland over 4,000 people get bowel cancer every year.

It is more common for people over 50 to get bowel cancer.

Therefore people over 50, and up to age 74 are invited to the bowel screening programme. Bowel screening helps to spot cancer at an early stage. This means that people have a better chance of getting better.

## The bowel screening kit looks for blood in your poo. How does bowel screening work?

You will send the Bowel Screening Programme Team some bits of your poo.

These are called samples.

They have sent you a kit to help you do this.

Here is what the test kit looks like.



### Contents:

- Letter with sticker
- Screening information
- Sticks
- Kit
- Envelope

Read all of this booklet before you do the test. Or get someone to read it to you.



This booklet will show you in an easy way how to do the test.

You might also find it helpful to watch the DVD.

You can call The Scottish Bowel Screening Programme if you have any questions about the kit.

**It will not cost you any money to call them. 0800 0121 833 (textphone 018001 0800 0121 833). Or visit [www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/bowel](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/bowel)**

They will answer any questions that you have. They will help you with any worries that you have about the test.

If you are worried about doing the test correctly please ask someone you know for help. They will help you with any worries that you have about the test.

## Using the kit

We need to check samples from 3 different poos. You will need to post your kit within 10 days of taking your first sample.

**Poo sample 1**

**Poo sample 2**

**Poo sample 3**

This booklet is set out to cover the 3 different poo samples.

This means you will do the same thing 3 times.

Only 1 sample can be done on 1 day.

There are 3 spaces on the kit to put your poo samples in.

## Sample 1



Get the letter and the kit that was sent to you. On the letter there is a sticky label that has your name on it.

Take the label off the letter. Stick the label on the first space on the kit. Write the date on the first space of your kit.

It is important that you keep your poo away from the water in your toilet bowl. Water will ruin your poo sample. You can stop your poo getting wet from the toilet bowl and your pee by:

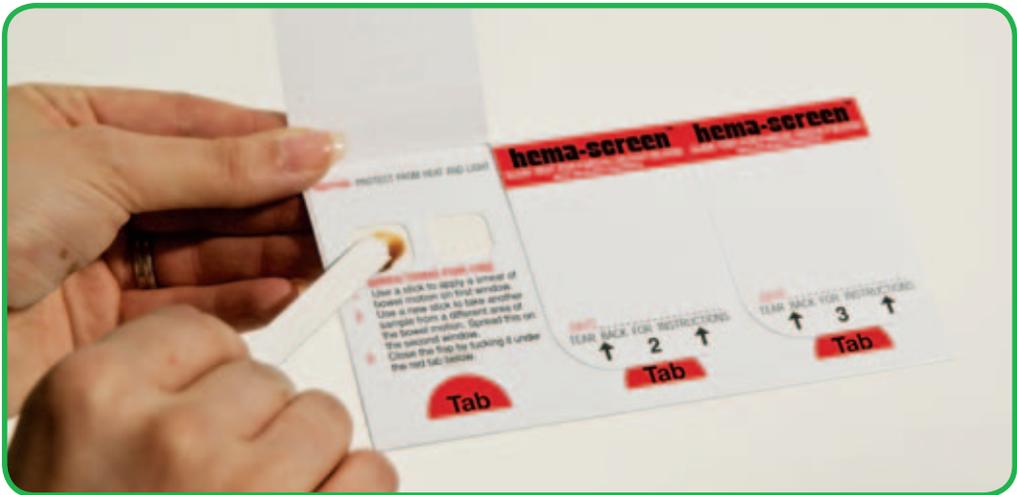
- **Putting your hand in a small plastic bag. Then you can catch your poo**
- **Using a clean and empty tub to catch your poo. The tub must be one you can throw away**
- **Using an empty ice cream tub or margarine tub**
- **Deciding how you are going to take your poo sample before you go to the toilet**

Take the kit and 2 sticks into the toilet/bathroom.

Pull back the first flap. Keep the other 2 flaps closed.

You will see 2 boxes.

Do your poo and make sure it does not touch the water.



Use a stick to take a small sample of your poo. Put the small poo sample in the first box.

Wrap up the stick in toilet tissue and put it in the bin.

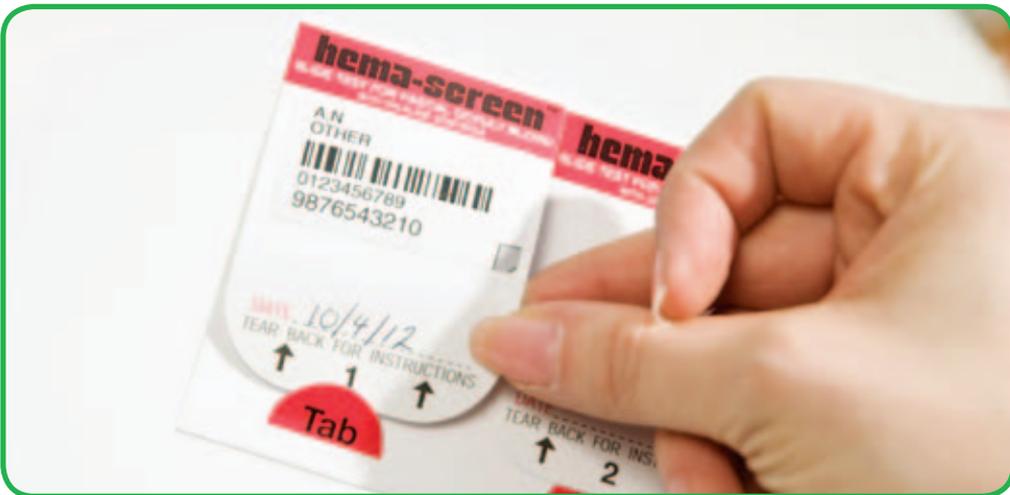


Use the other stick to take another small sample from a different part of the poo.

Put this in the second box.



Wrap up the stick in toilet paper and put in the bin. Please do not flush the stick down the toilet.



Close the flap.

Put the end of the flap under the red tab at the bottom.

This will keep it shut.

## Cleaning up



Empty the poo into the toilet/bathroom.



Wash or throw away the container.

Flush the toilet and put the card in a safe place.

Wash and dry your hands.

## Doing the next samples

You will need to do the same thing 2 more times. You have up to 10 days to do the next 2 samples. Remember to put the date on each sample.

### Sample 2



Remember you can only do one sample each day. The next time you need a poo write the date on the second flap of your kit.

Take your kit and container to the toilet. You will also need 2 more sticks.

Do your poo making sure it does not touch the water.

Pull back the second flap.

You will see 2 boxes.



Use a stick to take a small sample of your poo. Put the small poo sample in the first box.

Wrap up the stick in toilet tissue and put it in the bin.



Use another stick to take another sample from a different part of the poo.

Put this in the second box.



Wrap up the stick in toilet paper and put in the bin. Please do not flush the stick down the toilet.



Close the flap.

Put the end of the flap under the red tab at the bottom.

This will keep it shut.

## Cleaning up



Empty the poo into the toilet/bathroom.



Wash or throw away the container.

Flush the toilet and put the card in a safe place.

Wash and dry your hands.

## Sample 3



Remember you can only do one sample each day.  
The next time you need a poo write the date on the third flap of your kit.

Take your kit and container to the toilet. You will also need 2 more sticks.

Do your poo making sure it does not touch the water.  
Same as the two samples you've already done.

Pull back the third flap.

You will see 2 boxes.



Use a stick to take a small sample of your poo. Put the small poo sample in the first box.

Wrap up the stick in toilet tissue and put it in the bin.



Use the other stick to take another small sample from a different part of the poo.

Put this in the second box.



Wrap up the stick in toilet paper and put in the bin. Please do not flush the stick down the toilet.



Close the flap.

Put the end of the flap under the red tab at the bottom.

This will keep it shut.

## Cleaning up



Empty the poo into the toilet/bathroom.



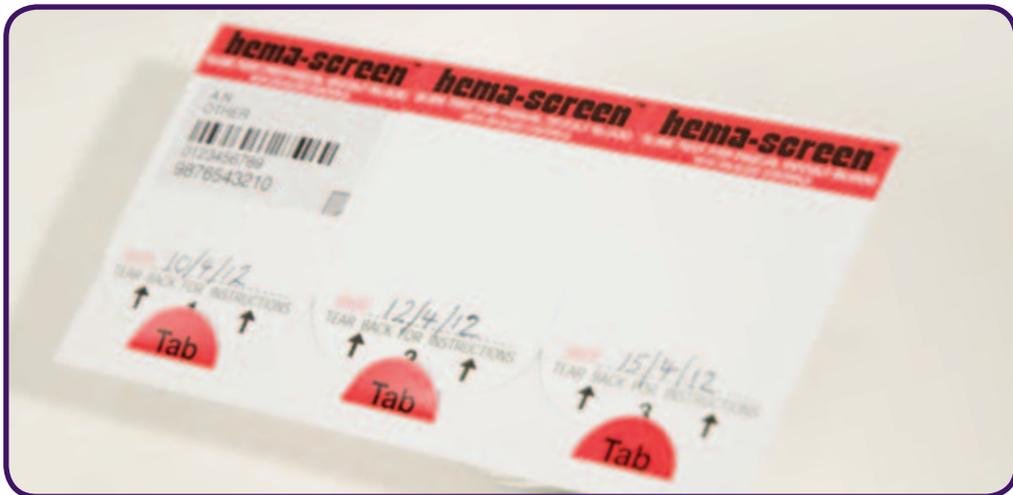
Wash or throw away the container.

Flush the toilet and put the card in a safe place.

Wash and dry your hands.

## Sending the kit

Before you send the Bowel Screening Programme your kit make sure that you have:



- Written your name on it
- Put samples in all the boxes
- Written dates on all of the samples

We sent you an envelope with your letter and kit.

Put your kit in this envelope when you have done all 3 samples.

To close the envelope remove the white strip and stick down the flap. You don't need to lick the envelope.

You do not need to put a stamp on the envelope as it is free to send it.



Post the envelope.

**If you made a mistake don't worry. Phone to speak to someone for another kit. 0800 0121 833. (textphone 018001 0800 0121 833)**

## **What will happen next?**

You will be sent the results of the test in no more than 2 weeks.

The bowel screening looks for blood in your poo.

Most people will do another test in 2 years.

Some people if invited will need to do the test again.

If they have found blood in your poo they will ask you to come for more tests with a doctor. One of these tests is called a colonoscopy. A doctor or a nurse will contact you to tell you about the test.

If you want to know more about a colonoscopy you can call Bowel Cancer UK on **0800 8 40 35 40**.

# Bowel Cancer UK aims to save lives and improve the quality of life for all those affected by bowel cancer

If you would like to find out more about helping to improve your bowel health then visit our website or call our Bowel Cancer Information and Support Service on Freephone:

**0800 8 40 35 40** or visit  
**[www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)**

For more information on bowel screening please contact the Scottish Bowel Screening programme on:

**0800 0121 833**  
(text phone 018001 0800 0121 833) or visit  
**[www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/bowel](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/bowel)**

 /charitybcuk

 @Bowel\_Cancer\_UK #bowellearning

