

## What is Cancer?

The body is made up from millions of cells and are constantly dying and being replaced. Cancer occurs when the cells divide and multiply too rapidly. This produces a lump of abnormal cells known as a tumour. There are 200 different types of cancer.

## Lung Cancer

Lung Cancer is one of the most common cancers and is the **leading cause** for cancer related deaths. Every year in Northern Ireland over **1,000 people are diagnosed** with lung cancer. 9 out of 10 cases are caused by smoking.

## Risk Factors

You may be more at risk of developing lung cancer if you:

- Smoke
- Have a family history of lung cancer (if so, contact your GP)
- Are exposed to chemicals that can cause lung cancer (such as asbestos)
- Are exposed to second-hand smoke
- Have had a previous smoking related cancer or lung disease



## What To Look Out For

The symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up phlegm (sputum) with traces of blood
- Persistent chest pain
- Loss of appetite
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Unexplained weight loss

Seek advice from your GP if you have any of the above symptoms.



## Reduce Your Risk

The greatest cause of lung cancer is **smoking**.

The more cigarettes you smoke, the greater your risk of developing lung cancer. The longer you smoke will further increase your risk. The good news is that as soon as you stop smoking your risk starts to decrease. So, no matter how long you have been smoking it is still worth quitting!



## Get Help to Quit

Stopping smoking has the biggest impact on reducing your risk of lung cancer. For advice and support or to find your local stop smoking service visit the Public Health Agency's Want 2 Stop website ([www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)). The website also offers the opportunity to order a 'Quit Kit' free of charge, which contains information and useful tips to stop smoking.



There are other ways of reducing our risk of lung cancer which includes -

- **Diet** - eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- **Physical Activity** - maintain a good level of physical activity to reduce your risk of lung cancer by over 20%. More vigorous activities have a greater impact on reducing your risk.

Although these lifestyle factors help prevent lung cancer in non smokers, if you are a smoker they may have less impact on reducing your risk. The best thing by far is to quit smoking.

## Preparing To Stop

There are many obstacles that smokers believe are in their way before they can successfully break the habit. We can help you get past these:

### 1) It's too late to stop. The damage has been done.

The sooner you stop smoking the better as the damage that is caused by smoking can be undone if you quit the habit.

### 2) Stopping smoking puts on weight.

Weight gain can be avoided by adopting an active lifestyle and eating a well balanced diet.

### 3) Smoking helps reduce stress.

Nicotine is actually a stimulant and so does not reduce stress. The feeling of becoming less stressed is actually achieved by feeding your nicotine craving.

### 4) I don't have the will power.

There's lots of support out there to help people stop smoking. You don't have to do it alone.

## Action Cancer also provides...

### Early Detection

A breast screening service is available onboard the Big Bus and in Action Cancer House in Belfast. Health checks are also available onboard the Big Bus.

### Support Services

Complementary therapy, Counselling and the Listening Ear Service are available for those closely affected by cancer in order to enhance quality of life.

### Education

Information on our website and leaflets on cancer prevention and early detection. Our health promotion team delivers talks to schools, workplaces and groups across Northern Ireland.

**Action Cancer is Northern Ireland's leading local cancer charity. All of the services we provide are confidential. We depend heavily on public and business donations to keep our services going.**

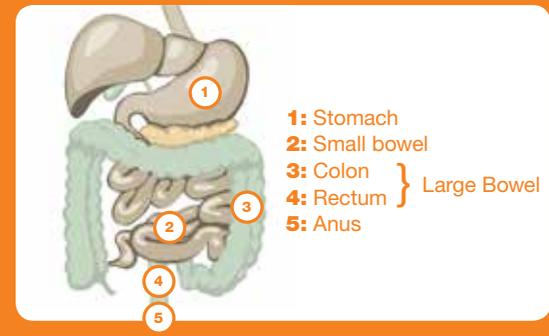
# Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal cancer or colon cancer, is any cancer that affects the colon (large bowel) and rectum (back passage). If diagnosed at an early stage, bowel cancer is **very treatable**.

Every year in Northern Ireland **1,100 people are diagnosed** and over **400 people die** from bowel cancer, making it Northern Ireland's second biggest cancer killer.

# Your Bowel

Your bowel is part of your digestive system. The function of the digestive system is to take food into the body and to get rid of waste. The bowel is where the waste product of eating is stored until it can leave the body (stool, faeces).



## Risk Factors

**You may be more at risk of developing bowel cancer if you:**

- ✓ Are over **50**
- ✓ Have a significant **family history** of bowel cancer (if so, contact your GP)
- ✓ Lead an **inactive lifestyle** and eat a **poor diet**
- ✓ Have a **history of polyps** (non-cancerous growths) in your bowel
- ✓ Have a **longstanding bowel condition** i.e. Chron's disease or colitis
- ✓ Have **Type II diabetes**



To find out more about our Cancer Awareness Sessions contact the health promotion team on **028 9080 3344** or email [healthpromotion@actioncancer.org](mailto:healthpromotion@actioncancer.org)

## Bowel Cancer Screening

The Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening programme aims to diagnose bowel cancer before symptoms appear and when the chance of successful treatment is greatest.

### Why Screen For Bowel Cancer?

- If bowel cancer is detected at a very early stage then treatment can be **90% successful**
- This means that around **60 deaths could be prevented** in Northern Ireland each year
- Screening can also pick up polyps. Polyps are clumps of cells that are not cancer but some may turn into cancer. If polyps are picked up early they can be easily removed before this happens.



To find out more on the Northern Ireland Screening Programme visit [www.cancerscreening.hscni.net](http://www.cancerscreening.hscni.net)

## What To Look Out For

An individual has more than a **9 in 10 chance** of surviving bowel cancer if it's detected early so it's important to familiarise yourself with the most common signs and symptoms of the disease.



### The initial symptoms of bowel cancer include:

- Blood in your stools or bleeding from your rectum
- Loose and more frequent bowel movements lasting three weeks or more
- Abdominal pain or a feeling of constant bloating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- Fatigue and breathlessness

Seek advice from your GP if you have any of the symptoms above. **Remember most symptoms will not be bowel cancer.**

### Screening Overview

- Men and women aged 60 to 71 are eligible for screening
- These people will receive a letter, a leaflet explaining the test and a home testing kit in the post every two years
- Recipients are asked to collect small stool samples on a special card and send the kit to a screening laboratory for examination
- If blood is found in the sample you will be invited for more tests. Blood in your stools does not always mean cancer
- The results are issued within two weeks of sending in the test
- Around 98 in 100 people will receive a normal result
- Research shows that regular bowel cancer screening reduces the risk of dying from bowel cancer by 16%.

To find out more on the Northern Ireland Screening Programme visit [www.cancerscreening.hscni.net](http://www.cancerscreening.hscni.net).

## Comforting News

Most of us, at some time in our lives, will suffer from problems with our bowels. Many, less serious conditions like piles, irritable bowel syndrome and colitis share some of the same symptoms as bowel cancer. It is important to get any symptoms checked out as **most symptoms will not be bowel cancer**. If it is cancer related, the sooner it is treated the better.

## Reduce Your Risk

To help reduce your risk of bowel cancer it's important to:

- ✓ **Eat plenty of fibre.** These include brown bread, brown rice and pasta and high fibre cereals such as porridge
- ✓ **Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.** Eat a rainbow – try to eat different coloured fruit and vegetables to get a variety of vitamins and minerals
- ✓ **Keep active with regular exercise.** Aim for at least 30 minutes five times a week
- ✓ **Keep hydrated.** It's recommended to drink 6 - 8 glasses a day to stay hydrated
- ✓ **Drink within recommended alcohol limits**  
Men should not regularly drink more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day, and women no more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol a day.
- ✓ **Don't smoke**
- ✓ **If eligible, take part in the bowel cancer screening programme**

