



Your Health Matters!

Angela Kwok your pharmacist Cunderdin Pharmacy

Catch Bowel Cancer before it catches you

Normally cells grow and multiply in a controlled way, however, if something causes a mistake to occur in the cells' genetic blueprints, this control can be lost. Cancer cells differ from normal cells in many ways that allow them to grow out of control and become invasive.

A tumor is an abnormal mass of tissue, which may be solid or fluid-filled. **A tumour does NOT mean cancer** - tumors can be **benign**, **pre-malignant** (pre-cancerous), or **malignant** (cancerous).

A tumour is benign (not cancerous) if these masses of cells do not spread beyond the boundary to other parts of the body, i.e. non-invasive. However, if a benign tumour continues to grow at the original site, it can cause problem by pressing on nearby organs.

A malignant tumour is made up of cancer cells. When it first develops, this malignant tumour may be confined to its original site, this is known as cancer in situ (or carcinoma in situ). If these cells are not treated, they will continue to grow in size, spread beyond their normal boundaries and into surrounding tissues, in which they become an invasive cancer. Some cancer cells can also break off, travel to different parts of the body and form secondary cancer(s) - i.e. Metastasis

Bowel cancer is the **second most common cancer** in both men and women in Australia.

Bowel cancer (also known as colorectal cancer) is a malignant tumour growth that develops most commonly in the lining of the large bowel, which includes the colon (large intestine), rectum & anal canal.

Most bowel cancers develop from tiny growths called 'polyps'. **Not ALL polyps will become cancerous**, but over time some polyps can turn into cancers. These malignant tumors can narrow and block the bowel or cause bleeding. In more advanced cases, these cancers can spread beyond the bowel to other organs.

As most bowel cancers start as polyps, all polyps should be removed to reduce risk of developing the disease. Almost all polyps can be removed during the procedure call colonoscopy.

Risk factor for Bowel Cancer	Bowel Cancer Preventions	Symptoms of Bowel Cancer
Increase age (risk > after 50's)	Perform faecal occult blood test (FOBT) at least every 2 years from 50's – recommended by Cancer Council Australia: check earlier and more frequency if you have risk factor(s)	There may be NO symptoms in early stage of bowel cancer - so FOBT is vital
Personal/ family history of bowel cancer or polyps		Changes in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhoea or incomplete bowel emptying)
Personal history of inflammatory bowel disease	Stop/reduce smoking or alcohol	Black/brown/bloody stool
Smoking or drinking alcohol	Exercise to lose weight	Unexplained anemia
Obesity and physical inactivity	Healthy diet with fresh fruit, vegetables, reduce salt intake	Abdominal pain, bloating or cramping
Foods high in fat, red meat and especially processed meats		

If your FOBT test is positive... For more information about Bowel Cancer, talk to your **doctor/ pharmacist**

There are a number of causes of 'hidden blood', so if, your screening test is positive it is uncertain if you have polyps or bowel cancer. To determine the source of the blood, your GP will refer you for a colonoscopy. Polyps discovered during a colonoscopy can be removed during the procedure.

The Australian Government's [National Bowel Cancer Screening Program](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/) currently provides a free FOBT kit and pathology to all Australians aged 50, 55, 60, 65 70 &74 <http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/>

Bowelscan is organised by Rotary every May in WA to raise awareness of bowel cancer and provide free testing for early detection. **Bowelscan** is a Rotary community service program, and **no profit is made by either Rotary or participating pharmacies.**

Useful Website <http://www.catchcancer.org.au/> Cancer Council Australia <http://www.cancer.org.au>