

Wakefield GP Practice Cancer Screening project

Telephone Script for contacting non-responders - Bowel Screening

Introduction

“Hello _____ (verify who you are speaking with).
 My name is _____ I’m phoning from _____ (name of GP practice).
 There is nothing to worry about. I’m phoning about the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme.
 Is it OK to have a chat with you about this? (If not, arrange a convenient time to call back).”



Receipt of bowel cancer screening kit

“Have you received a FREE bowel cancer screening kit in the post?”

YES

NO

“Our records show that it hasn’t been received for testing.
 Is there a reason why you didn’t return your kit?”

Wants to participate but didn’t get round to it

Unsure whether to complete or not

Does not want to participate

Check the address is correct

Check OK with doing the test and explore any barriers with taking the sample, collecting poo, where to store the kit

Explain the ‘Bowel Cancer Screening Programme’ and any symptoms to look out for in the future using the script over the page

Check still have the kit and the instructions leaflet

Give the Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline number
 Freephone **0800 707 60 60** to:
 - Request new or replacement kit
 (offer to order one for them if you can – see protocol for details)
 - Get information about bowel cancer screening,
 - Ask any questions about completing the kit
 - Opt out

Encourage the patient to confirm their plan of action and summarise with them

Ending the call.

“Thank you for your time today, do you have anything that you would like to ask.”

The Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK and most people diagnosed are over 60 years old. People aged 60 to 74 are invited to take part in bowel cancer screening every two years. Soon people will be invited from the age of 50.

Screening aims to find bowel cancer at an early stage, before you notice any symptoms. Finding cancer early makes it easier to treat and can help save lives.

The bowel cancer screening kit is a simple **free** test you can do at home. The test looks for tiny amounts of blood in poo (faeces, stool) which can be a sign of cancer.

The screening kit comes with instructions. You will need to:

- Collect 1 sample of poo in a small plastic sample bottle.
- Return the sample to the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme Hub in the post for testing.

Results are posted to you within 2 weeks and your GP is informed.

Provide the opportunity to ask any questions.

Common symptoms of bowel cancer if asked by patient

- A lasting change in bowel habit, especially going to the toilet more often or diarrhoea for several weeks.
- Bleeding from the back passage without any obvious reason.
- Pain in your abdomen, especially if it is severe.
- A lump in your abdomen.

Provide the opportunity to ask any questions.

If you are not able to answer questions please signpost the patient to the Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline number on Freephone 0800 707 60 60 and select North East option. The helpline is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

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Question & answer sheet

These are some questions and answers to help you with conversations with patients. Remember, if you are not able to answer questions please signpost the patient to the **Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline number on Freephone 0800 707 60 60.**

- **Where is the bowel? And what does it do?**
The large bowel is a long pipe in the digestive system just below the tummy. It absorbs water and nutrients from food and passes waste out of the body as poo.
- **I have piles (haemorrhoids); does this mean blood in my poo won't be caused by bowel cancer?**
People with haemorrhoids are as likely to get bowel cancer as anyone else - and should definitely take part in screening. If you see blood in your poo, even if you have haemorrhoids, always check with your GP.
- **Why do I need to be screened? I have no symptoms or family history.**
Bowel cancer doesn't always show symptoms/signs at an early stage. Screening saves lives - the earlier the problem is detected; the more likely people are to lead long and healthy lives. Anyone can get bowel cancer and screening can prevent it developing and save your life.
- **My parent/sibling had bowel cancer. What should I do?**
A family history of bowel cancer (a close relative) puts you at much greater risk of developing the disease so it's very important to take part in screening. If you are worried about any symptoms see your doctor straight away.
- **Can I reduce my chances of getting bowel cancer?**
Yes. Apart from screening, these are things you can do to reduce the chance of bowel cancer.
 - Eat less red meat (beef, lamb) and avoid processed meat (sausages, bacon)
 - Eat plenty of wholegrains such as cereal, bread, pasta and rice
 - Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and veg every day
 - Maintain a healthy weight and waist size
 - Be more physically active
 - Drink no more than 14 units a week (6 pints of beer or 6 glasses of wine). Spread your units over 3 or more days and have alcohol free days
 - Stop smoking

You can find out more at www.nhs.uk by searching for 'bowel cancer screening' and/or 'bowel cancer'.

Overcoming reasons for not doing the screening - barriers

- **It's far too messy and unhygienic:** If you wash your hands well, as you normally would, when you have finished the test, you will be safe. You can use a plastic bag over your hand or gloves.
- **I'm not sure what to do with the test.** Provide step by step instructions on how to carry out the test and practical tips – refer to the 'NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme leaflet'.
- **I am worried about having enough privacy and/or time to use the kit:** Make a plan of the days you can have more privacy and time at home to do the test.
- **I am scared of being told I have bowel cancer:** Screening aims to find bowel cancer at an early stage. The earlier the problem is detected; the more likely people are to lead long and healthy lives. The Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline has specialist staff that can talk to patients more about this. Call them on Freephone 0800 707 60 60.
- **My friend did it and he/she had a bad experience:** Find out what the experience was, address accordingly and emphasise most people rarely have such experiences (if it's related to colonoscopy/repeat testing). If it's a personal issue, experiences are different for everyone; an explanation of the kit will enable you to become more confident about how to complete the test kit.

This telephone script was developed by Wakefield Council and Wakefield CCG as part of the Wakefield GP cancer screening project funded by Yorkshire Cancer Research.