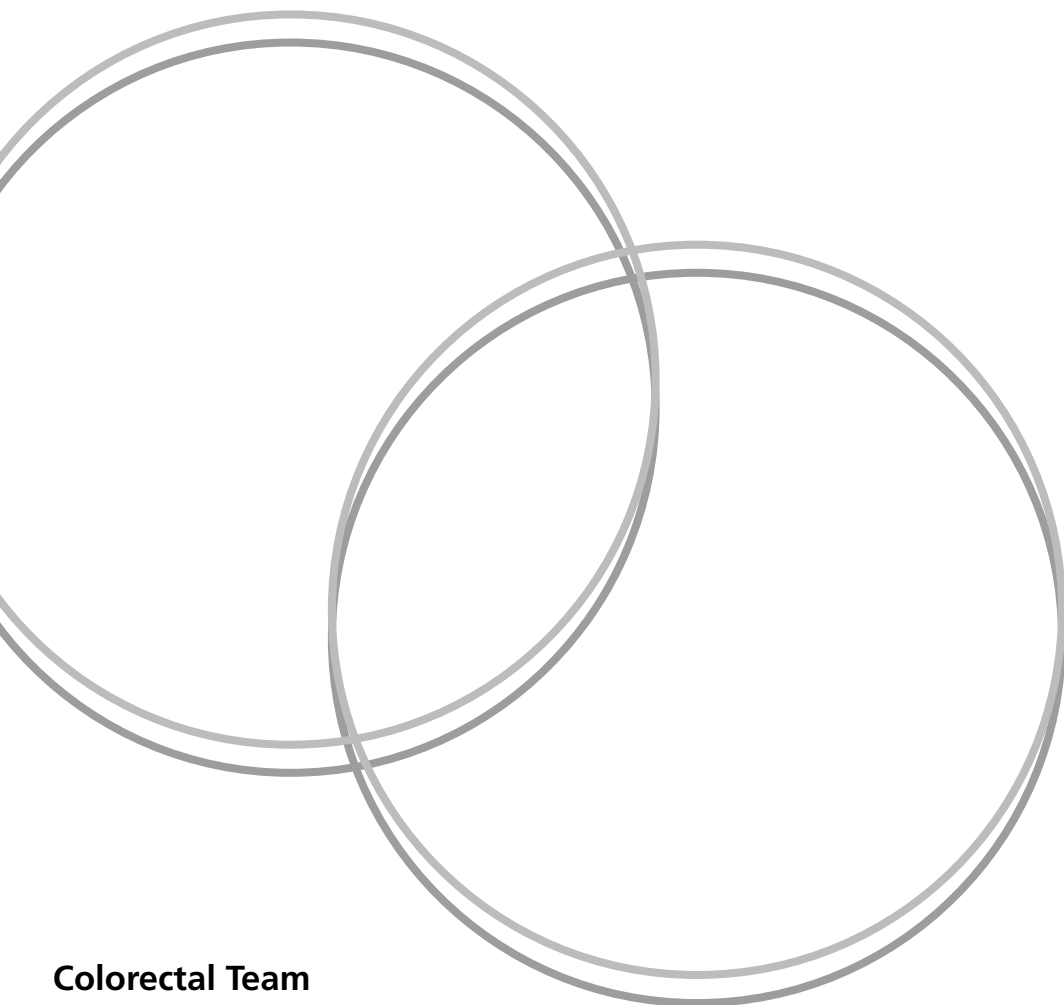




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Suspected bowel cancer

Information for patients



Colorectal Team

You have been given this leaflet because the result of your endoscopy has revealed an abnormal area in your bowel.

The endoscopist who carried out your endoscopy will have explained to you the results of your test and that it is very likely you have bowel cancer. If you have not already, you will be advised to have a biopsy taken to confirm this (a small sample of tissue collected from the area).

We will continue to refer to the likely cancer as 'suspected' until the results of the biopsy are returned. This leaflet will explain what happens next.

# What is bowel cancer?

Bowel cancer is a cancer that starts in the large bowel (colon) or back passage (rectum). It is also known as colorectal cancer.

Cancer is caused by abnormal cells starting to divide and grow in an uncontrolled way. The cells can grow into surrounding tissues or organs, and may spread to other areas of the body.

We can get more information about an actual bowel cancer by assessing the 'stage' of the cancer. Staging a cancer involves describing its size, where it is and whether it has spread. Knowing the stage of a cancer helps people and their doctors decide on the best treatment.

Common scans used for staging include CT scans (computerised tomography) and MRI scans (magnetic resonance imaging). Your endoscopist will request these scans for you and you will need to come back to hospital to have them.

## **Further information about bowel cancer can be found at:**

[www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

# What happens next?

You will be contacted by one of our Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialists within two working days after your endoscopy. They are experienced nurses who will help and support you and your family throughout your investigations and any treatment you may have. They will be your link to the hospital and will advise you of the next steps, including arranging your dates for scans and hospital appointments.

You can find contact details for the Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialists at the end of this leaflet.

# Scan results

After your scans have been carried out and we have the results of your biopsies, we will discuss your results at our multi-disciplinary team meeting (MDT).

The MDT is a group of cancer specialists, including:

- **Colorectal Surgeons** – who carry out operations for colorectal cancer
- **Oncologists** – who give chemotherapy and radiotherapy
- **Radiologists** – who look at your scans
- **Pathologists** – who look at your biopsies
- **Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialists** – who are your help and support link to the hospital

At the MDT meeting we will decide which treatment should be recommended to you. This will be discussed with you at a clinic appointment. Depending on the results of your investigations and the MDT recommendation, this appointment may be with a surgeon or an oncologist, who can discuss your treatment plan.

Treatment for bowel cancer usually involves surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

## Bowel cancer patient pathway

This flowchart shows the suspected bowel cancer patient pathway you are on. To make sure you progress along the pathway within the recommended timeframe, you must be available to attend appointments for the two month period after your GP referred you.

## **Day 1**

**Your GP referred you to a local hospital.**

## **By day 14**

**You had an endoscopy  
(camera test looking at your bowel).**

## **By day 14-28**

**You will have had the required staging investigations. This might be a CT and/or MRI scan. You will need to be available during this time to come for the scan/s.**

## **By day 28**

**Your case will have been discussed at an MDT meeting, to decide the best treatment plan for you.**

## **By day 35**

**You will have seen a member of the Bowel Cancer Team at Oxford University Hospitals, to discuss your treatment plan. You will need to be available during this time to come to a hospital appointment for this discussion.**

## **By day 62**

**You will have started your treatment (if required). You will need to come to several hospital appointments for the treatment.**

# How to contact us

If you have any questions whilst you are having investigations or treatment for suspected bowel cancer, please contact the Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialists.

## **Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialists**

Tel: **01865 221 454**

An answerphone service is available for you to leave a message.

Email: **[colorectal.nursing@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:colorectal.nursing@ouh.nhs.uk)**

We will aim to respond to you within 1 working day.



If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

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