BOWEL SCREENING FLIP CHART

IT'S NOT SHAME, IT'S A PART OF LIFE

Stay healthy and strong for your family and do the free bowel test.

Flip chart for health workers talking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients about bowel cancer screening

Using this flip chart

The flip chart is designed to be used by health workers talking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients about bowel cancer and bowel cancer screening.

It can be used with small groups or with an individual. Because it has lots of information, you might want to use just a couple of pages or one section only.

Much of the text in this flip chart was developed through a consultation process to identify key messages about bowel screening that is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. More than 250 people were involved in that process. Please adapt the wording of these messages, so they work for your community and clients.

Acknowledgements

This flip chart draws on earlier work and the wisdom and experience of many individuals across Australia who are committed to improving the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

- The Menzies School of Health Research team including Gail Garvey, Jenny Brands, Anne-Marie Dewar, Brian Arley and Christine Long, who produced a version for the 2018-19 National Indigenous Bowel Screening Pilot. Illustration alterations by Dreamtime Public Relations and Gilimbaa, and original artwork by Jordon Lovegrove, a Ngarrindjeri man.
- The original version was produced in 2008 by the Queensland Bowel Cancer Screening Program, Queensland Health, and featured artwork 'New World Order' by Bianca Beetson and Kathleen Cameron. Julie Haysom produced the original hand rendered illustrations.
- The WA Bowel Cancer Screening Implementation Team, WA Health, refined it, with artwork 'Making Time' by Valerie Ah Chee, titled, 'You're lookin good on the outside. But what about the inside?' Screening for bowel cancer (2008). Reproduced with permission from the WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network; the Government of Western Australia, Department of Health 2016.
- SA Health produced a version with the assistance of health workers from the APY lands, Umoona Tjutagku Health Service, and the Aboriginal Health Council of SA (AHCSA), with additional artwork 'Making Tracks' by Karen Briggs and design work by Dreamtime Public Relations.

The artwork represents the National Indigenous Bowel Screening Project journey and continues to hold significance for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. The coloured meeting places are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and health services. The pathway that passes through the meeting circles represents the tests being sent out to the community and then back to the processing centre for analysing. The processing centre is represented by the larger meeting place.

About the artist: JORDAN LOVEGROVE is a Ngarrindjeri man who combines intimate knowledge of Aboriginal communities and illustration skills to develop outstanding Indigenous artwork which is applied to a range of print and online communications.

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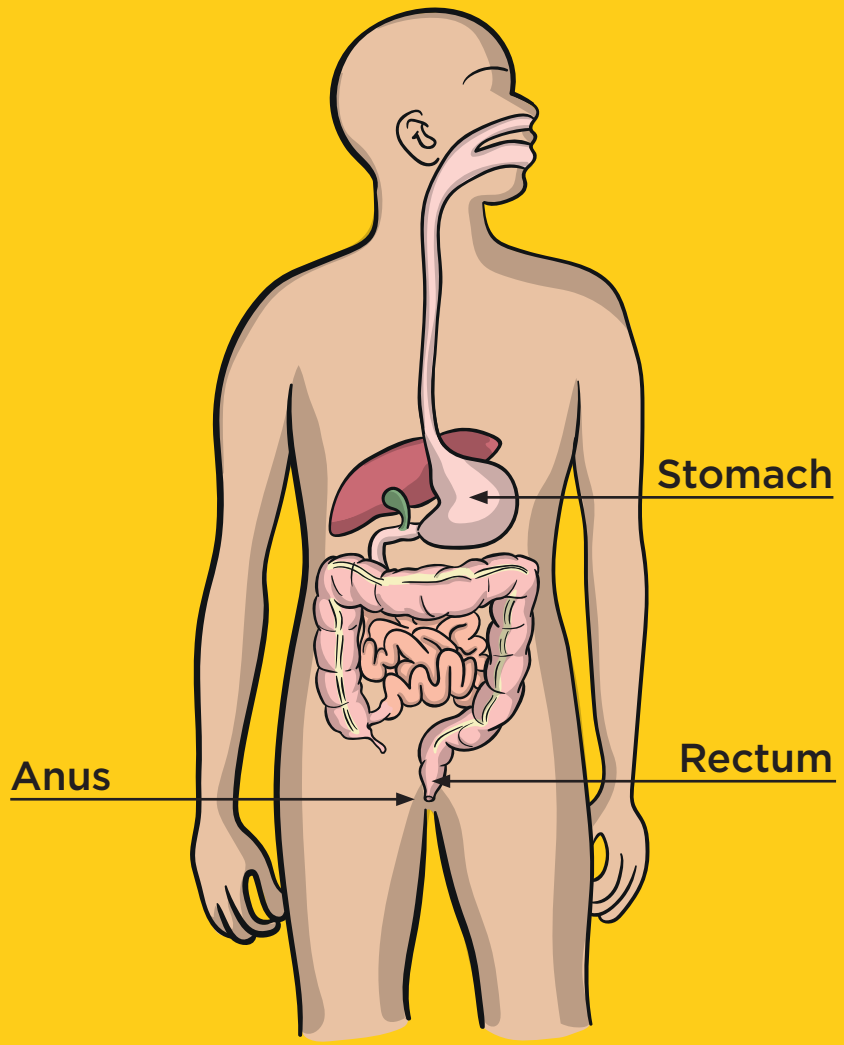
SECTION ONE
About bowel cancer

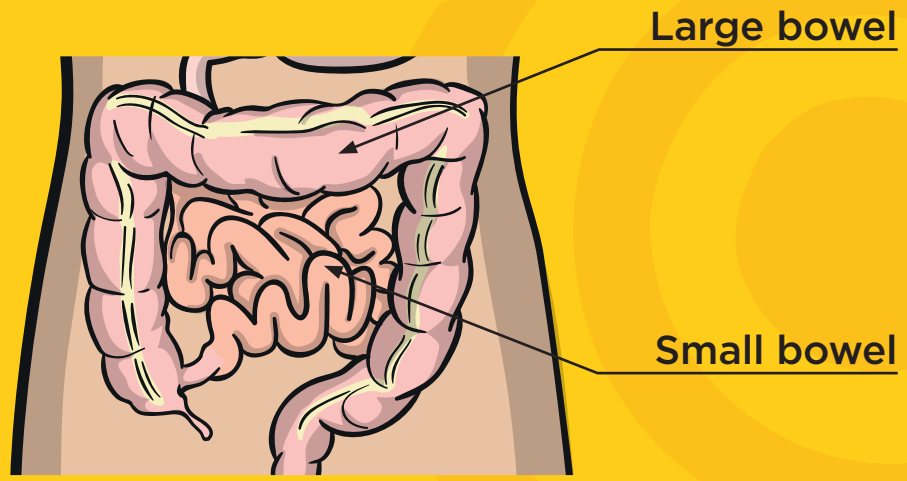
Bowel cancer:

- is common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- can develop without any obvious signs
- can be treated if found early.

There is a simple test you can do to find bowel changes early.

What is the bowel

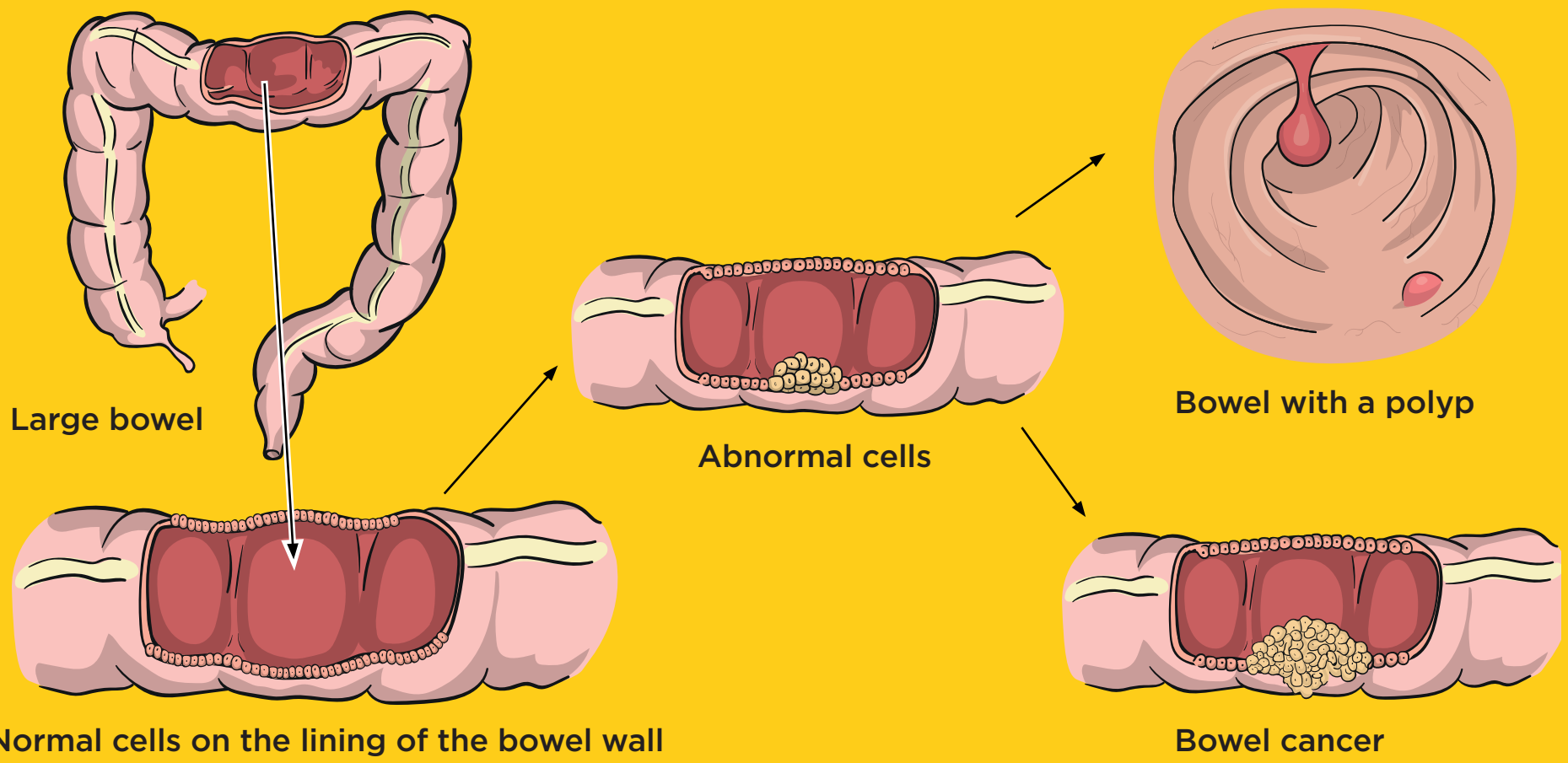




What is the bowel

- The bowel connects your stomach to your rectum where waste material (poo) is stored until passed out from the anus (bum).
- The bowel has three main parts:
  - The small bowel – absorbs nutrients (goodness) from food.
  - The large bowel (colon) – absorbs water and salt.
  - The rectum – stores poo.
- The bowel plays an important role in digesting food we eat.
- Digestion is when food and drink are broken down into nutrients for our body to use for energy and to build and nourish our cells.

Changes in the bowel



Changes in the bowel

- The bowel is made up of cells.
- For our bowel to stay healthy, old cells are constantly replaced by new cells.
- Sometimes things can go wrong during this process.
- The cells become abnormal and gather in clumps. Some can turn into polyps. Some can turn into cancer.
- Polyps are small growths on the lining of the bowel that look a bit like a cherry on a stalk.
- Many polyps are harmless, but some grow into cancer.
- Bowel cancer is most often found in the large bowel.
- Tiny amounts of blood can leak from a polyp or a cancer and a bowel screening test can detect the blood.
- If polyps are found early they can be removed and the risk of bowel cancer is reduced.

Who is at risk of bowel cancer

The biggest risk is being over 50.

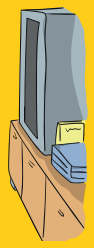
Other risks:

Poor diet and being overweight

Smoking

Drinking a lot of alcohol

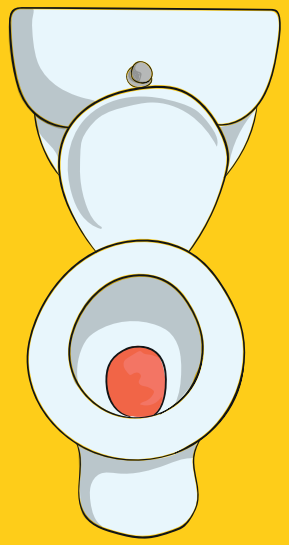
Being inactive



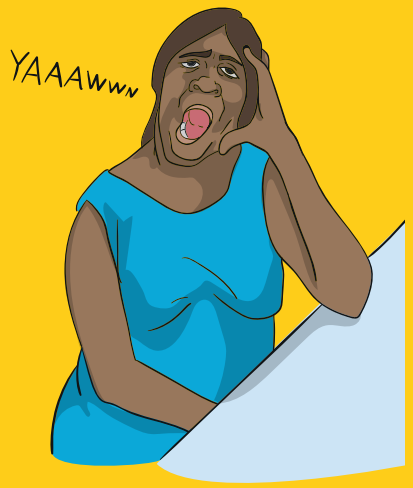
Family history of bowel cancer

What are the signs of bowel cancer

It's important to do a bowel screening test even if you have no symptoms.



Blood in the poo



Feeling tired for no reason (anaemia)

Changes in your normal bowel habits

Tummy Pain

Losing weight for no reason

If you have any of these signs, it does not mean you have bowel cancer, but you should see your doctor as soon as possible.

How to stay healthy and strong

Please do the bowel screening test for your family.
Stay healthy and strong so you can enjoy your children and grandchildren.

To stay healthy and strong and reduce your risk of bowel cancer:

- eat more healthy foods — fruit and vegetables
- eat less red meat and processed meats such as ham and bacon
- avoid ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks
- keep a healthy weight
- be physically active
- quit smoking
- avoid alcohol or cut down on the amount you drink
- if you are aged 50 to 74, talk to your doctor or health worker about doing the free bowel screening test.

SECTION TWO
What is a bowel screening test

The bowel screening test comes in a kit with everything you need.

The test involves taking 2 tiny samples from 2 different poos.

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program mails out free kits to people aged between 50 and 74, who are registered with Medicare. You may be offered a kit at your local health centre.

You can complete the test at home, or you might like to see if you can do the test at your health centre.

The samples are sent off for testing — you can post them, or your health centre can send them for you.

The samples will be tested in the laboratory which safely collects, transports and disposes of the samples.

The test results are sent to you and your doctor about 4 weeks after you posted the test.

I feel healthy.
Why you should still do the test

Bowel screening can pick up changes to your bowel long before you might notice any symptoms.

1. Bowel screening is a test for people who do not have any signs of cancer.
2. Bowel cancer can develop without any obvious signs.
3. Polyps and very small bowel cancers can often bleed without you knowing.
4. The bowel screening test can find tiny amounts of blood in the poo.
5. The test can pick up changes in the bowel long before you would notice any signs.
6. Most bowel cancers can be successfully treated if found early.
7. The bowel screening test is easy to do and doesn't hurt.

When not to do the test

The test looks for blood in the poo, so don't do it if you have:

- piles (haemorrhoids) that are bleeding. If this happens see your doctor.
- have blood in your urine, poo or in the toilet bowl If this happens, see your doctor.
- had a recent colonoscopy or are being treated by your doctor for bowel problems.
- your menstrual period — wait for three days after your period finishes before doing the test.

What's in the test kit

2 x toilet liners

2 x collection tubes

1 x plastic bag

1 x Reply Paid envelope

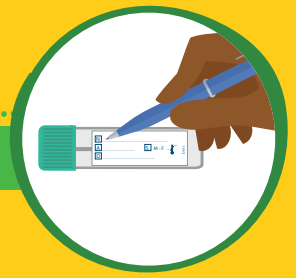
How to do the test

You just need to collect 2 tiny samples from 2 different poos

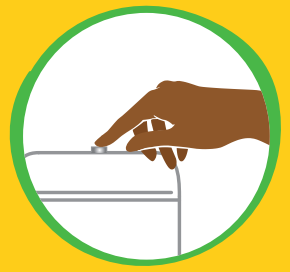
Before you do the test:

- **keep taking your medication**
- **eat what you normally do**
- **put the test where you will remember to do it!**

1. PREPARE



Write on tube label



First do a wee and flush

Then put liner in toilet

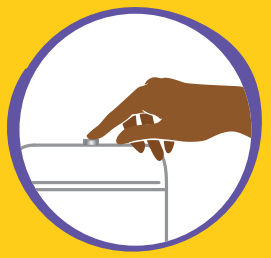
2. COLLECT

Do a poo on the liner

Open tube, pull out collection stick

Drag stick through poo

Put stick back in tube till it clicks



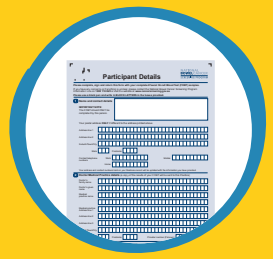
Flush toilet and wash hands

3. STORE & REPEAT

Place tube in bag
Put sample in fridge

Next poo, repeat with second tube

4. POST YOUR SAMPLE



Complete the participant details form – make sure you sign it

Fill out the reply-paid envelope

Post the samples as soon as you can

How to do the test

STEP 1 – PREPARE

- Read all the steps before you start.
- On 1 small tube, write your name, date of birth and date you do the test.
- Do a wee and flush the toilet.
- Put 1 toilet liner in the toilet with the picture facing up. (It's okay if it gets wet.)

STEP 2 – COLLECT

- Poo onto the liner.
- Open the small tube and drag the tip of the stick through the poo (you only need a tiny bit).
- Put the stick back into the tube and push until it clicks shut.
- Flush the toilet - it's okay to flush the liner. Wash your hands.
- Flush the toilet liner and poo down the toilet. Wash your hands.

STEP 3 – STORE & REPEAT STEPS 1-3

- Put the small tube into the plastic bag.
- Put the plastic bag somewhere cool, like in the fridge (don't freeze). Don't worry, it's clean, as the bag zips shut.
- REPEAT—When you do your next poo, do steps 1, 2 and 3 again with the other tube. Then go to Step 4. Try to collect both samples within 3 days of each other.

STEP 4 – POST YOUR SAMPLE

- On the Participant Details form, write the 2 dates your samples were taken and sign the back of the form.
- On the envelope, sign the FRONT and write your name and address on the BACK.
- Put the form AND the two samples in the envelope and seal it. The envelope doesn't say what's inside, so it's private.
- Post the samples as soon as you can. Take it to a post office (not a post box) as the samples need to stay cool—they don't need to be refrigerated during postage though

Getting your test results

Your result will be mailed to you and your doctor within 4 weeks after you post your samples.

- A **NEGATIVE** result means no blood was found. Do the test again in 2 years.
- A **POSITIVE** result means blood was found. It does not mean you have cancer. But you need to see your doctor to find out why there is blood in your poo.

You should make a time to see your doctor as soon as possible.

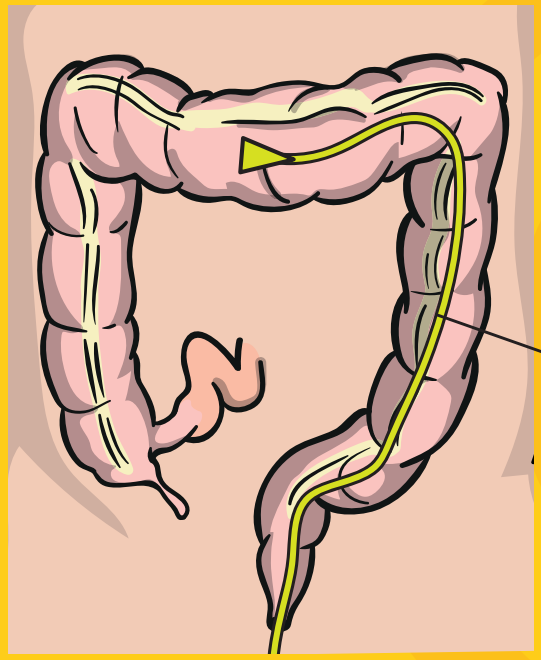
If you get a positive result

If you get a positive test result (there was blood found in your poo), you should see your healthcare professional to find out what's causing the bleeding. They will probably refer you to have a procedure called a colonoscopy.

During a colonoscopy a doctor inserts a tiny camera into the rectum to look for polyps or cancerous growths.

This is usually done in a hospital and you will be given a medicine to relax you (called sedation) so you will need to have someone pick you up from the hospital.

The day before the colonoscopy you will need to have a special drink to help empty your bowel. You may need to take time off work or plan ahead for this. Talk to your doctor about a colonoscopy for more information.



What is a colonoscopy

If you get a positive test result (there was blood found in your poo) your doctor will probably refer you for a colonoscopy. There is no cost for a colonoscopy as a public patient in a public hospital. Talk to your doctor about this and if there are any costs.

A colonoscopy is a procedure to look inside the bowel. It is usually done in a hospital and you will be given a medicine to relax you (called sedation). The doctor inserts a narrow flexible tube with a tiny camera attached into the rectum to look for polyps or cancerous growths.

As with all medical procedures, there are risks as well as benefits in having a colonoscopy. However, the benefits of finding cancer early far outweigh the potential risks. Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns.

If polyps or other growths are found, the doctor will usually remove them immediately. After the procedure you will stay in the hospital for about two hours. You will need to have someone pick you up. The day before the colonoscopy you will need to have a special drink to help empty your bowel. You will need to be near a toilet all day, so you may need to take time off work or plan ahead.

After, you will be told how the procedure went, and any follow-up that is required. You and your doctor will be sent a report about the procedure and its results.

Questions or concerns?

If you have any worries or concerns about the test or your results, you can speak to your health worker or doctor at your local clinic.

Talk to your doctor if:

- you have a family history of bowel cancer
- you think you might have signs of bowel cancer, such as blood in the poo, changes in your poo like looser poo or straining to do a poo, tummy pain, weight loss, or feeling tired for no reason.

STAY HEALTHY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND

DO A BOWEL TEST TODAY!

Test Kit Helpline: 1800 930 998

National Cancer Screening Register: 1800 627 701 or www.ncsr.gov.au

www.health.gov.au/nbcsp

Australian Government

NATIONAL BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Original Artwork Credit: Jordon Lovegrove