

Bowel Cancer **TACKLE IT** before it tackles you!



Why tackle bowel cancer?

One in 10 Queensland men will develop bowel cancer before the age of 85 years. Whilst bowel cancer does not discriminate, men are at a slightly greater risk of developing bowel cancer than women.

The facts are clear for men:

- ❖ Bowel cancer is the second leading cause of cancer in Queensland men
- ❖ In 2007, 1565 Queensland men were diagnosed with bowel cancer
- ❖ In 2007, 520 Queensland men died of bowel cancer

For further information about the **National Bowel Cancer Screening Program** call 1800 118 868 or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/bowelcancer

**NATIONAL
BOWELCANCER**
SCREENING PROGRAM



Queensland
Government

How to tackle bowel cancer

You can help tackle bowel cancer! The good news is there are steps you can take to reduce your risk of developing bowel cancer and to detect it early.

Diet and lifestyle factors all contribute towards reducing your risk of developing bowel cancer. Some tips include:

- ❖ maintaining a healthy body weight
- ❖ eating a varied diet high in fibre and low in fat with at least 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables everyday
- ❖ finding at least 30 minutes for physical activity each day
- ❖ quitting smoking or remaining a non smoker
- ❖ drinking no more than 2 standard drinks per day (ie. a standard drink equals a 375ml mid strength beer or 30ml spirits)

You can also tackle bowel cancer through screening. Screening for bowel cancer is easy and involves a simple test called a FOBT (Faecal Occult Blood Test).

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is currently inviting people turning 50, 55 or 65 to participate using an FOBT which is sent to people in the mail around the time of their eligible birthday. Participants complete the test by taking a small sample from two bowel motions which is then sent to a pathology laboratory for testing.

The test looks for tiny amounts of 'hidden' blood in the bowel motion. If blood is found, people are then advised to see a GP for referral for further investigations such as colonoscopy to determine the cause of the bleeding.

It is also important to keep a watch out for symptoms. Some possible symptoms include:

- ❖ bleeding from the bowel
- ❖ changes in your normal bowel habits
- ❖ feeling of incomplete emptying of the bowel
- ❖ unexplained weight loss
- ❖ persistent cramping or abdominal pain and
- ❖ signs of anaemia such as general weakness, tiredness and breathlessness.

If you experience any of these symptoms, don't be embarrassed. **Speak with your GP straight away.**