

Your health and wellbeing: how to help yourself



Information for patients

Although your risk of cancer increases as you get older, it is never too late to start doing things to reduce it. This leaflet has advice on the many things you can do to help keep yourself healthy as well as the health screening checks available. If you have questions about bowel cancer, bowel scope screening or how to improve bowel health, please do not hesitate to ask one of our specialist screening practitioners (SSPs). If you have any other queries or concerns, contact your GP or practice nurse.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Lifestyle changes

Give up smoking

Giving up smoking is the best way to cut your risk of cancer and there is plenty of free support to help you with this. Tobacco causes most lung cancers and increases your risk of at least 13 other types of the disease. Remember: it is never too late to quit.

For help with giving up, go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree, or ask your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

Cut down on alcohol

If you drink alcohol, it is best to stay within the guidelines of having no more than 14 units a week. Drinking any type of alcohol increases your risk of cancer. This is because your body breaks it down into a toxic chemical that damages your DNA.

Get advice on cutting down on how much you drink at www.drinkaware.co.uk

Do regular exercise

You can cut your risk of certain cancers as well as many other health problems such as diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke and heart disease by staying active and doing regular exercise. Physical activity can also help you to stay a healthy weight.

Lose weight

You can make a big difference to your health by making small changes to your diet and how active you are. Being overweight can increase your risk of 13 different types of cancer, including breast and bowel cancer.



To lose weight you need to:

1. eat healthier foods
2. eat less
3. get more active.

You might find these hard to do but there is plenty of support available. Ask your GP or nurse to refer you to a free weight management service. You can also get more advice at NHS livewell at www.nhs.uk/

Eat a healthy diet

Certain foods can reduce your risk of bowel cancer by helping poo to pass through your body easily. It is also good to eat more of these because they are low calorie and full of nutrients. They include:

- foods high in fibre
- beans or wholegrains such as brown rice and whole wheat
- fruit and vegetables.

Some foods can increase your risk of cancer as well as making you more likely to put on weight, so it is best to eat less of them – although there is nothing wrong with the odd treat. They include:

- high calorie foods
- fast food and sugary sweets
- processed and red meats, such as ham, salami and beef
- foods preserved in salt, such as cured meats, pickled vegetables and salted fish.

Boost your mental health

- Connect : Connect with the people around you – your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.
- Be active: You do not have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

- **Keep learning:** Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and improve your confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument or figure out how to fix your bike?
- **Give to others:** Even the smallest act can help you to improve how you feel, whether it is a smile, a thank you or a kind word. You could also try things such as volunteering at your local community centre.
- **Be mindful:** Be more aware of the present moment, of 'now', including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness 'mindfulness'. It can improve how you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Health checks

Breast cancer screening

Screening aims to find breast cancers when they are small and can be treated most effectively. If you are a women aged 50 to 70 you will be invited for a routine (breast x-ray) mammography once every three years. Some women aged 47 to 49 and 71 to 73 are also being invited as part of a national trial. If you are over 70 you can refer yourself for Breast Screening by Contacting The Breast Screening Team at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on 020 3758 2024.

If you have a breast cancer symptom, please see your GP as soon as possible. Do not wait to be invited for screening.

Cervical cancer screening (smear test)

Screening aims to finds cervical cancers at an early stage as well as preventing them, by finding changes before they develop into cancer. If you are a women aged 25 to 64 you will be invited for a routine smear test every three to five years.



Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening

Screening aims to find whether there is a bulge or swelling in the aorta, the main blood vessel that supplies blood from your heart to your abdomen (tummy). This is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). This can be dangerous because if it gets bigger it could burst and cause serious internal bleeding. Screening can help spot a swelling early when it is easier to treat.

Men aged 65 and over are more at risk of AAAs. If you are a man, you will be invited for screening during the year you turn 65. If you would like more information, contact your GP.

Diabetic Eye Screening (DESP)

Screening aims to find diabetic retinopathy, one of the leading causes of sight loss in people with diabetes. By finding early signs of this condition, you can have treatment that prevents sight loss in 90% of cases.

You have this screening every year. Your GP will refer you for the test when you are diagnosed with diabetes or when you join the practice (if you already have diabetes). If you do not receive an invitation for screening within three months, please contact either your GP or the screening programme, tel: 020 7188 1979, email gst-tr.seldesp.admin@nhs.net

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.



Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

**You can also contact us by using our online form at
www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals**

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.