

BOWEL CANCER INFORMATION



Marie Keating

FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

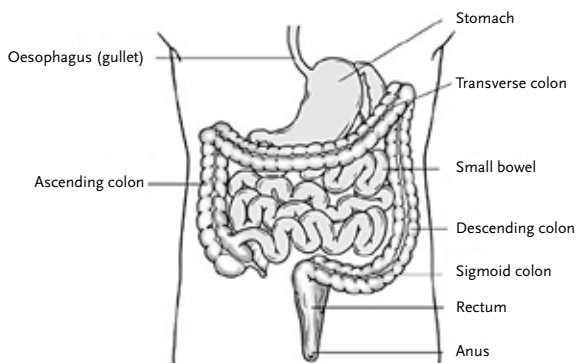
THE SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT BOWEL CANCER

The Bowel

The bowel is part of the digestive system. It is divided into the

- Small bowel or small intestine
- Large bowel or colon and rectum

Bowel cancer is cancer of the large intestine- colon and rectum, and is a common form of cancer in both men and women.



What causes Bowel Cancer?

In Ireland, approximately 2,100 people each year develop cancer of the colon. The cause of cancer of the large bowel in most people is still unknown, but research is going on all the time to try and find the cause. Like most types of cancer, bowel cancer is more common in older people. It is unusual for people under the age of fifty to get the disease.

- **Diet** - bowel cancer appears to be associated with diet. The incidence of bowel cancer is higher in countries that have a low intake of fibre and a high intake of fat
- **Family history** - a family history of bowel cancer (at least three close relatives) may increase the risk of getting bowel cancer
- **Polyyps** (small growths in the bowel) - may increase the risk
- **Bowel diseases** - people who have had ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease for a long time also have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer. Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are diseases of the lining of the bowel

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How common is Bowel Cancer?

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in Ireland following skin cancer, prostate and breast. There is a one in nineteen chance of developing the disease in your lifetime (National Cancer Registry). The risk increase with age.

How can I Reduce my Risk?

It may help to reduce your risk of developing bowel cancer if you eat

- More fibres from cereals, beans, fruit and vegetables
- Less fat including fatty meats and dairy foods
- More poultry such as chicken and turkey
- Less cured and processed meat such as bacon, sausages and ham
- More oily fish such as mackerel, salmon, tuna and sardines
- Less sugary and fatty processed foods such as cakes biscuits and chocolate
- Less alcohol

If a member of your family has been diagnosed with bowel cancer you should consult your doctor who may suggest a simple test to detect blood in your bowel motions (stools).

Remember early detection of the disease is your best chance of a cure.

What are the Symptoms of Bowel Cancer?

- Blood in, or on, the stools (bowel motions), the blood may be bright red or dark in colour
- A change in normal bowel habit such as diarrhoea or constipation for no obvious reason, lasting longer than six weeks
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain in the abdomen or rectum
- A feeling of not having emptied your bowel properly after a bowel motion

Other diseases apart from bowel cancer can cause all of the above symptoms. However if you experience any of the above symptoms do make an appointment with your GP to get checked out.

How is bowel cancer diagnosed?

As part of a complete medical examination, there are two main screening tests for bowel cancer

- Stool (bowel motion test)- a sample is taken and examined for blood
- Examining the inside of the bowel (sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy). This involves putting a long flexible tube into the back passage. There is a camera on one end, which allows the doctor to film the inside of the bowel
- Sometimes other tests may be carried out such as a barium enema or an MRI scan

What is the treatment for Bowel Cancer?

Treatment depends on the stage of the cancer and where it is in the bowel. It is important that you discuss your treatment with your doctor and that you understand why a particular type of treatment has been recommended for you. Cancers affecting the colon and those affecting the rectum are usually treated in slightly different ways.

- Early stage bowel cancer, surgery is the main treatment. Often, the cancer can be completely removed, and for some people it will never come back
- Advanced stage bowel cancer, means that the cancer has spread from where it started in the bowel. Treatment for advanced stage bowel cancer may include, chemotherapy, surgery, radiotherapy or monoclonal antibodies

If you have any questions about your treatment, don't be afraid to ask your doctor or nurse. Sometimes it may help to make a list of your questions and to take a close friend or relative to your appointment with you.

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Who we are

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998 Ronan Keating and each member of the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to breast cancer. They committed to provide all women and their families with the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim as "**making cancer less frightening by enlightening**". The Marie Keating Foundation is the realisation of a family's dedication- it is a promise to themselves in action.

Through its community information service our Foundation's dedicated nurses have enlightened over 100,000 people of the causes and risk factors of breast and other cancers. The Foundation is continuing to expand its awareness campaigns on each of the key cancers, at local level through its community outreach approach as well as through national campaigns.

The Foundation finances other areas of need in cancer care. Monies raised help to refurbish hospital oncology waiting rooms in making them more comfortable for patients. A limited comfort fund for those in financial difficulty as a result of their illness provides immediate assistance, when required.

The Foundation is committed to raising awareness among young people in schools of cancer and its prevention and to this end, has successfully developed a Cancer Awareness Programme for schools which will be delivered to all second level senior cycle students.

After only eight years in operation, the Marie Keating Foundation is well established and facing a wealth of opportunities and claims on its services and resources.

On February 2nd 1998, our mother Marie died from breast cancer. At the time and all through her illness, we could do nothing to help our Mother who had, all our lives, done everything for us.

We, the Keating family have set up this charity in her name to try to help and prevent others going through what Mam went through and what we are still going through to this day. This is also to show that such a wonderful mother and person did not die in vain.

Take care.

The Keating Family



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