



Bowel cancer screening: how to take the test



Bowel screening

Step-by-step instructions for using the test kit

This kit has been sent to you as part of Northern Ireland's bowel cancer screening programme. The kit is designed for use in the privacy of your own home and involves only three visits to the toilet. Then all you need to do is pop the kit in the special envelope provided and send it off in the normal post to the screening centre free-of-charge.

*Please read the following instructions in full **before** you use the kit.*

1. Getting ready

- Write your name, date of birth and today's date on the first flap (1) of the test kit.
- Take the test kit, a pen and these instructions with you to the toilet.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Break off two of the cardboard sticks provided.
- Lift the first flap (1) – you will see two small windows (A and B). Do not open the flap on the reverse of the kit marked 'DO NOT OPEN', this is for laboratory use only. Leave the other flaps (2 and 3) closed as these are for different samples on separate days.



2. Collecting your bowel motion

- It is important that your bowel motion **does not** come into contact with either the toilet water or toilet bowl, as this could affect the test result.
- You can catch your bowel motion using folded pieces of toilet paper in your hand, or by placing your hand inside a small clean plastic bag, or using any clean, disposable container.



3. Taking two samples from your bowel motion

- Using one of the cardboard sticks, take a very small sample of the bowel motion and spread **thinly** over the first window (A). Then dispose of the stick down the toilet.
- Using another cardboard stick take a second sample **from a different part** of the bowel motion and spread this on the second window (B).



Dispose of the stick and the remains of the bowel motion by flushing them down the toilet. If you used a plastic bag or disposable container, place it inside a plastic bag and dispose of in an outside bin.

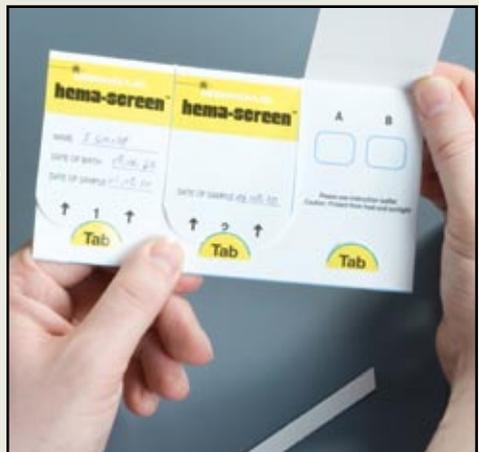
4. When you have finished

- Once both windows under flap (1) have been completed, fold the flap back down using the tab provided.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Check that you have filled in all your details on the first flap (1).
- You have now completed your first two sample windows. You will need to repeat this on two more **separate** days using flaps (2) and (3).
- You can keep the kit in the bathroom as long as it is away from direct heat and direct sunlight. Keep the kit out of the reach of children and animals.
- Keep these instructions with the kit as you will need to refer to them again.



5. Collecting your second and third bowel motions

- On a further two visits to the toilet (on **different** days), follow steps 1–4, but using the **second** flap (2) on your second visit and the **third** flap (3) on the third visit.
- Please note that the second and third flaps should be completed within **10 days** of the first flap.
- Make sure you fill in the date on which you took the samples on flaps (2) and (3).



6. Final checklist

On collecting the samples from your third visit, check that you have done the following:

- Written your name and date of birth on the test kit.
- Put samples on all of the six 'windows' (two under each flap).
- Written the dates when you collected each sample on the three flaps.
- Collected the second and third samples within **10 days** of the first (if the time taken is longer, telephone the freephone helpline on 0800 015 2514 for further information on what to do).

If you have completed all of the above instructions then place your kit in the freepost envelope provided and seal it.

Post the kit **immediately** as it is important that the laboratory receive the kit as soon as possible. The sealed envelope meets postal regulations and is safe to send in the post. Please make sure it is clean to protect postal workers.

Thank you for completing the test. You will receive a letter shortly telling you the results and what to do next. If you have not heard from us within two weeks or if you have difficulty completing the test, please telephone the freephone helpline on 0800 015 2514. Friendly and trained staff will be happy to help and answer your questions in confidence.

For further information or this leaflet in another language or format visit:

www.cancerscreening.hscni.net



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