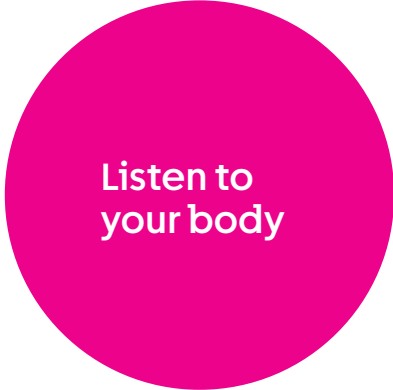


Spotting cancer early saves lives



Listen to
your body

Do you want to know about spotting the symptoms of cancer?

In this leaflet, you'll find out:

- When to talk to your doctor
- Tips for getting the most out of your appointment
- Some key facts about screening.

Cancer is much more common in people over 50, but it can affect anyone of any age. If something looks or feels unusual, tell your doctor.

In most cases it won't be cancer – but if it is, finding it at an early stage can make a real difference.

Listen to your body

You know your body best, so take charge if something doesn't look or feel quite right or won't go away.

The symptoms listed here are more likely to be caused by something other than cancer. But if you do notice any of these, or something else unusual even if it's not on the list – talk to your doctor.

Upper body:

- Long-lasting **heartburn or indigestion**
- Persistent **bloating or tummy pain**
- **Unusual breast or chest changes** such as any change in the size, shape or feel, including any nipple or skin changes

Skin:

- A **sore** that won't heal
- A **mole** that's new or changed
- An **unusual lump** or swelling anywhere on your body

Feeling unwell:

- Very heavy **night sweats or fever**
- Unexplained **weight loss**
- An unexplained **pain or ache**
- Feeling more **tired** than usual
- **Breathlessness**
- **Appetite loss**

Mouth and throat:

- **Croaky voice or hoarseness** that won't go away or a **lasting cough**
- A **mouth or tongue ulcer** that lasts longer than three weeks
- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Coughing up blood**

Going to the toilet and genitals:

- A **change in bowel habit**, such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often
- **Blood in your poo or pee**
- **Problems peeing**
- **Unexplained vaginal bleeding**, including after sex, between periods or after the menopause



Talk to your doctor

Whether it's via phone, video or face-to-face, your doctor wants to hear about any unusual changes you're experiencing. If you're worried about talking to a doctor, here are some tips:

✔ Be prepared

Think about how to describe any changes and how long you've had them for. Writing down what you want to say and ask can help.

✔ Be honest

Tell the doctor about anything unusual, even if it doesn't seem important or you think it might be embarrassing. Your doctor is a professional and is used to helping with lots of different types of symptoms.

✔ Be thorough

Mention all your symptoms and don't put it down to 'just getting older', or assume it's part of another health condition.

✔ Stick with it

Don't worry you might be wasting your doctor's time. Even if you're struggling to get an appointment, or you've been to see them already, they want to know if something's still not quite right.



Cancer screening

Screening is for people who don't have any symptoms. It can save lives by finding cancers at an early stage.

There are three national cancer screening programmes in the UK, **breast, bowel and cervical**. A new targeted **lung cancer screening** programme is being introduced in some areas.

To be invited for screening, you need to be registered with your doctor. It's important to read the information provided with the invite, so you can decide if you'd like to take part or not.

People are invited for screening tests at different ages. Visit [cruk.org/screening](https://www.cruk.org.uk/screening) to read more.

Even if you've been screened recently and no matter what age you are, it's important to tell your doctor if you notice anything that's not normal for you.



Early diagnosis saves lives

What if it is cancer?

Here's some good news: survival is on the up. And thanks to research, treatments are now kinder and more effective than ever. But most importantly, when cancer's spotted at an early stage, treatment is more likely to be successful.

How to find out more:

Visit our website

Find out more about spotting cancer early, including information about cancer screening across the UK, at [cruk.org/spotcancerearly](https://www.cruk.org/spotcancerearly)

Give us a call

Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for information or support. Just call **0808 800 4040**.

If you'd like to provide any feedback on this leaflet or would like to know more about the information sources used to create it, please email publications@cancer.org.uk

And if you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support what we're doing, you can call **0300 123 1022**.

Ref: SCE04_TEXT January 2024
Due for review by: January 2026

Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247).

© Cancer Research UK (2024)



Patient Information Forum