

SPOTTING CANCER EARLY SAVES LIVES



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

INFORMATION
FOR WOMEN



TAKE CHARGE

You might have picked up this leaflet because you'd like to know about spotting the symptoms of cancer. Perhaps someone close to you has been touched by it, or maybe you're just curious.

Whatever your situation, you'll find information about what to keep an eye out for, tips for seeing your doctor if something's not quite right, and some key facts about screening.



And if you've spotted something unusual, remember: you're in charge here.

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



KNOW YOUR BODY

Knowing your body means getting to know what's normal for you – from how your body looks and feels to how you feel in yourself. Anything that's new, unusual for you or doesn't go away needs to be checked out.

Don't worry – the symptoms below are more likely to be caused by something other than cancer. But if you notice any of these, or something else that's not quite right, make an appointment to chat to your doctor.

- Breathlessness
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding, such as bleeding from the vagina after sex, between periods or after the menopause
- Very heavy night sweats
- Croaky voice or hoarseness that won't go away
- Persistent heartburn or indigestion
- Mouth or tongue ulcer that lasts longer than three weeks
- Persistent bloating
- Difficulty swallowing
- A change in bowel habit, such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often
- A sore that won't heal

Don't feel you need to check yourself in a set way or time. Instead, just get to know what your body normally looks and feels like so you're more likely to notice a change.



- Appetite loss
- Unusual breast changes such as any change in the size, shape or feel of a breast, including any nipple or skin changes
- Blood in your poo (stools)
- Blood in your pee (urine)
- Problems peeing
- Unexplained weight loss
- A new mole or changes to a mole
- Coughing up blood
- Persistent cough
- An unexplained pain or ache
- An unusual lump or swelling anywhere on your body

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

When you're worried that there's something wrong, telling a doctor can seem a bit overwhelming. Here are some ideas for how to get the most out of your appointment.



Be honest. Tell the doctor everything you've experienced that is not normal for you, even if it doesn't seem that important or you think it might be a bit embarrassing.



Be thorough. Mention all your symptoms. When something doesn't feel right and doesn't go away, don't put it down to 'just getting older', or assume it's part of another health condition. Cancer is much more common in people over 50, but can affect anyone of any age, so tell your doctor everything you're feeling.



Be stubborn. Don't ever worry you might be wasting your doctor's time. They want to know if your symptoms haven't gone away, or if you still feel something's not quite right – even if you've already been to see them. So don't hesitate to make an appointment to go back.



Be prepared. Before you go, think about what you want to talk about in the appointment and write down any important questions to ask.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR SCREENING INVITE

Screening is designed for people who are feeling healthy and don't have any symptoms.



There are three free national cancer screening programmes in the UK; breast, bowel and cervical.



To be invited for screening, you need to be registered with a doctor. When you receive your screening invitation, you'll also be sent information about the screening test. It's important you read this, so you can weigh up whether you'd like to take part or not.



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



People become eligible for the different screening tests at different ages. Use our simple online tool at [cruk.org/screening](https://www.cruk.org/screening) to see when you'll be invited.

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



WE'RE ONLINE...

Find out more about spotting cancer early, including information about screening across the UK, at cruk.org/spotcancerearly



...AND ON THE PHONE

Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for any 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 in creating it, please call 020 3469 8333 or 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.



LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER

