

Spotting cancer early saves lives: Information for women



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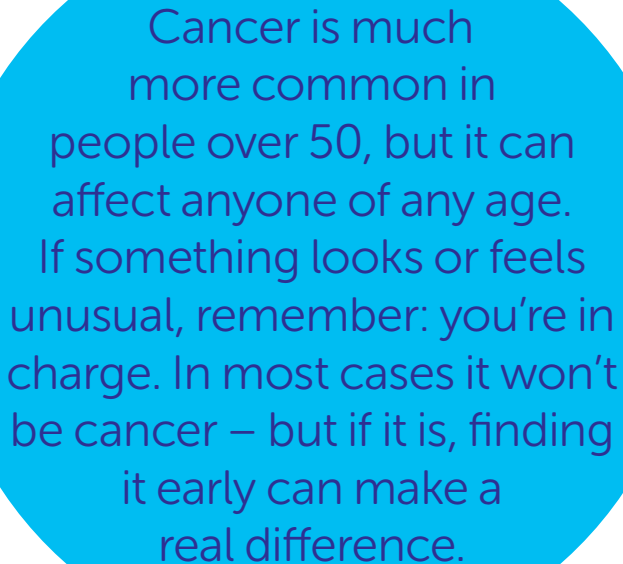
Together we will beat cancer



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 had it, or maybe you're just curious.

Whatever your situation, you'll find information about: when to talk to your doctor, tips for getting the most out of your appointment, and 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, remember: you're in charge. In most cases it won't be cancer – but if it is, finding it early can make a real difference.

Listen to your body

When it comes to your body, you know it best, so listen to it and take action if something doesn't feel quite right or won't go away.

And don't worry – the symptoms below are more likely to be caused by something other than cancer. But if you do notice any of these, or something else unusual, it's good to talk about it, so make an appointment to chat to your doctor. Even if it's not on this list, it's best to get any unusual changes checked out.

Unusual breast changes such as any change in the size, shape or feel of a breast, including any nipple or skin changes

A change in bowel habit, such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often

Persistent bloating

Unexplained vaginal bleeding, such as bleeding from the vagina after sex, between periods or after the menopause

Blood in your poo (stools)

Blood in your pee (urine)

Problems peeing

Croaky voice or hoarseness that won't go away

Mouth or tongue ulcer that lasts longer than three weeks

Coughing up blood

Persistent cough

Breathlessness

Difficulty swallowing

Persistent heartburn or indigestion

Very heavy night sweats

A sore that won't heal

Appetite loss

Unexplained weight loss

A new mole or changes to a mole

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



Be honest. Tell the doctor about anything unusual, even if it doesn't seem that important or you think it might be a bit embarrassing.



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. If it's something that's bothering you, then your doctor will want to hear about it.



Be stubborn. Don't worry you might be wasting your doctor's time. Even if you've been to see them already, they want to know if your symptoms haven't gone away, or if you still feel something's not quite right.

Experienced any of the listed symptoms? You could highlight or circle them on the previous page and show it to your doctor.

Look out for your screening invite

Screening is for people who feel healthy and don't have any symptoms. There are three 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 decide if you'd like to take part or not.

People become eligible for the different screening tests at different ages. Use our simple online tool at cruk.org/screening to see when you'll be invited.

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.



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 cancer screening across the UK, at cruk.org/spotcancerearly



...and on the phone

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 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**.

