Key things to know about FIT in England

The Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) is a type of faecal occult blood test used to detect traces of human blood in stool samples. It is being used in screening and in primary and secondary care.

Screening pathway

- FIT is the primary test in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme (BCSP).
- It is for people aged 60–74 years [1] every 2 years. People aged over 74 can request a kit [2].
- The threshold for determining a positive result is set at 120 µg Hb/g faeces.

Symptomatic pathway

- FIT is primarily used to guide the management of patients in primary care.*
- FIT may also be used in secondary care for triage and/or when a FIT is not completed in primary care.*
- It is for people who present symptomatically.*
- The threshold for determining a positive result is lower than BCSP (normally 10 µg Hb/g faeces).

Primary care investigation

- FIT is offered to people with symptoms.
- Kit is given out by the GP* or sent to the patient by the lab on GP request.
- Patient completes and returns kit to GP practice or lab.*
- GP is given a result which may include a numerical value and communicates it to the patient.
- GP refers to lower GI pathway.*
  Or
- May still warrant further investigation.

Triage in secondary care

- GP refers people with symptoms to a specialist.
- GP or specialist* gives kit to symptomatic patient.
- Patient completes and returns kit to lab.*
- Specialist receives the result, communicating it to the patient.
- Result is fed into clinical triage with further investigation.*
  Or
- Result is fed into clinical triage, patient may still warrant further investigation based on symptoms and clinical judgement.

If a patient’s screening result is negative and they develop symptoms they should be offered a symptomatic FIT kit by their GP.

[1] People aged 50–59 will be invited to participate in bowel cancer screening, using a phased approach, as the programme expands.

Patients shouldn’t be discharged based on a negative FIT result alone. Make sure to safety net patient until symptoms are explained or resolved.

For further information visit [cruk.org/bowelscreeninghub](cruk.org/bowelscreeninghub) and [cruk.org/FITsymptomatic](cruk.org/FITsymptomatic)

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