



MEN'S BOWEL HEALTH

Mens Health Night



Why Men See a Specialist

- Changes in bowel habits – constipation, diarrhoea, or irregularity
- Rectal bleeding or blood in stool
- Persistent abdominal discomfort or bloating
- Screening or follow-up for bowel cancer
- Family history of bowel disease or cancer
- Unexplained weight loss or fatigue

Symptoms to Watch For

- Change in bowel habits lasting more than a few weeks
- Blood in stool (bright red or dark/black)
- Abdominal pain, cramping, or bloating
- Feeling that bowel doesn't fully empty
- Unexplained fatigue (possible anaemia)
- Unintentional weight loss
- Narrow or pencil-like stools

SELF CHECK

- Over 58 and completed your screening test?
- Any recent change in bowel habits?
- Any blood in stool or toilet?
- Ongoing bloating or discomfort?
- Unexplained fatigue or weight loss?
- Family history of bowel cancer?
- Symptoms lasting more than 2–4 weeks?

What's Normal vs Not?

- Normal: Occasional changes in bowel habits
- Not normal: Persistent change lasting weeks
- Normal: Mild bloating after certain foods
- Not normal: Ongoing pain or discomfort
- Normal: Brief constipation or diarrhoea
- Not normal: Repeated or worsening symptoms

New Zealand Snapshot

- Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in NZ
- ~3,000 cases diagnosed each year
- Second highest cause of cancer death
- Higher rates in men than women
- Early detection dramatically improves survival

FREE NZ BOWEL SCREENING PROGRAM

- Available for ages 50–74
- Simple at-home stool test (every 2 years)
- Looks for hidden blood in stool
- If positive → follow-up colonoscopy
- Early detection can prevent cancer

RED FLAGS – SEE A DOCTOR ASAP

- Blood in stool
- Black/tarry stools
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Severe fatigue
- Ongoing change in bowel habits

Talking to Your Doctor

- “My bowel habits have changed over the last few weeks”
- “I’ve noticed blood in my stool”
- “I feel bloated or uncomfortable most days”
- “I don’t feel like I fully empty my bowels”
- “I’ve been more tired than usual”
- “This has been ongoing and isn’t improving”
- Your GP may arrange stool tests, blood tests, or colonoscopy

Prevention & Health Tips

- Eat high fibre diet (fruit, veg, whole grains)
- Limit processed/red meat intake
- Stay active and maintain healthy weight
- Limit alcohol and stop smoking
- Participate in screening when eligible
- Don’t ignore symptoms—early action matters

Early detection saves lives. Most bowel cancers are treatable when found early.