

Bowel Screening: FOBT positive. What happens next?

The participant receives a positive result letter from the centre, informing them of the result and to expect to be contacted with information on the next step from their NHS Board.

The letter will provide them with the local NHS Board bowel screening contact details.

Pre-assessment is expected to be carried out within two weeks of the positive result and may be either a telephone assessment or an interview.

At pre-assessment, the healthcare professional will:

- explain the meaning of a positive test and possible outcomes
- listen to the patient's concerns
- describe colonoscopy and the importance of bowel cleansing
- explain the very small but potentially serious risks of colonoscopy
- explain the possibility of an incomplete procedure
- describe Double Contrast Barium Enema or next investigation
- give a contact name and number
- issue written information on the above.

Patients receive an explanation of possible outcomes of colonoscopy as follows:

Positive Screening Test but 'normal' colonoscopy – If the colonoscopy finds no abnormality in the bowel, studies have shown that a positive test will probably have a simple cause that does not require further investigation.

Polyyps – These are small wart-like growths that can be removed from the bowel wall during colonoscopy. Polyyps can grow into cancers, so their detection and removal at this stage makes screening a preventative process.

Cancer – When cancer is detected at an early stage, effective treatment and cure are much more likely, and patients have the opportunity to prepare for elective surgery.



Bowel Screening: The screening pathway.

- All individuals will be sent a guaiac-based FOBt in the first instance. If individuals require to repeat or retest they will be asked to complete a Faecal Immunochemical Kit (FIT) instead.
- If the overall result is positive, the individual will be referred to hospital for assessment and offered a colonoscopy, if appropriate.
- The National Screening Co-ordinator based within the National Services Division, NHS National Services Scotland has a responsibility to monitor and coordinate the screening programme.
- The Scottish Bowel Screening Programme will be integrated with the existing colorectal service to ensure equity for all patients for a national rollout.
- The NHS Boards have a responsibility to ensure the quality and performance of care for the patients within their NHS Board area referred for further investigation and treatment.
- Any patient with an overall positive result will be referred into the existing care pathway for patients with bowel symptoms. The screening programme should be viewed as an additional urgent referral route and not a separate service.
- The pre-colonoscopy assessment is completed by an experienced nurse or medical practitioner either by telephone or out-patient appointment. These individuals will not have had any contact with healthcare professionals by this stage and will require advice, reassurance and explanation of the risks of colonoscopy as well as the benefits and identification of any co-morbidity.
- Following assessment, if the patient is fit and meets the criteria set for the programme, they will be provided with an appointment for colonoscopy. If the colonoscopy is incomplete, then referral for a Double Contrast Barium Enema will be provided.
- As with all patients, regardless of the route of referral, following the result of the colonoscopy they will either be referred to another specialist or treated accordingly in the existing care pathways.
- NHS Boards will ensure that the service meets the NHS Quality Improvement Scotland Bowel Screening Standards.

