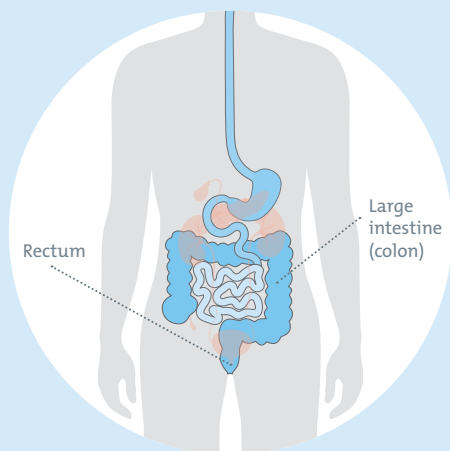


What is bowel cancer?

Bowel cancer, also known as colon or colorectal cancer, occurs when abnormal cells in the walls of the bowel (large intestine, colon, or rectum) uncontrollably multiply.



Signs and symptoms

Unfortunately, the early stages of bowel cancer typically have no symptoms. Therefore, it's incredibly important to screen for bowel cancer if you are aged 50 or older.

Bowel cancer symptoms may include:

- > changes to bowel movements (diarrhoea, constipation, or the feeling of incomplete emptying)
- > blood in stools
- > abdominal pain, bloating or cramping
- > weight loss
- > unexplained fatigue.

Common tests used to diagnose bowel cancer

Following your screening results, further tests such as a colonoscopy, may be recommended by your doctor if bowel cancer is suspected.

Blood test

Your doctor may order several blood tests to check your overall health and to detect proteins produced by cancer cells. These proteins are called tumour markers.

Physical examination

Your doctor will feel your abdomen for swelling. Your doctor may discuss an internal physical exam, where they will insert a gloved finger to feel for lumps or swelling in the anus or rectum.

Colonoscopy and biopsy

A colonoscopy is a type of endoscopic procedure that allows a doctor to examine the inside lining of your large bowel. The doctor will use a colonoscope — a long, thin flexible tube with a small camera and light attached — to view pictures of the inside of your bowel on a video screen. A colonoscopy can also enable a biopsy, where a very small section of the bowel lining is extracted for laboratory testing to identify bowel cancer.

CT scan

If you have experienced a rapid blockage of the bowel, a CT scan and an operation can be used to diagnose bowel cancer.

Treatment options

Every patient's treatment and care journey will be based on their individual needs. If your bowel cancer has spread beyond the bowel, you may need a combination of treatments listed below:

Surgery

Bowel cancer surgery can be used to remove cancerous tumours from the bowel. If you have been diagnosed with bowel cancer, your doctor will recommend removing the tumour (surgery). This may or may not be followed by chemotherapy.

If you have been diagnosed with metastatic bowel cancer, your doctor may recommend surgery, combined with chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a common form of treatment involving the use of anti-cancer drugs to attack cancer cells. Chemotherapy is often used alongside other treatments such as radiotherapy or surgery.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is the use of radiation to treat and manage cancer.

Immunotherapy and targeted therapy

Immunotherapy and targeted therapy may be recommended for metastatic bowel cancer or bowel cancer with certain gene test results.

Immunotherapy improves your immune system's ability to fight cancer cells.

Targeted therapy involves drugs that target features of cancer cells to stop them growing.

Stomal therapy

Stomal therapy may be suitable after a surgical procedure such as a colostomy. A colostomy involves creating an opening, or 'ostomy' from the bowel, onto the abdominal wall.

Your care team

Throughout your bowel cancer journey, your care team is likely to include a gastroenterologist, colorectal surgeon and nursing and allied health staff. You may also see other specialists, such as a radiation oncologist or medical oncologist.

Your care team is here to provide you with comprehensive treatment, access to talented, caring specialists and support for you, and your family, during this challenging time.

Why choose Epworth for cancer care?

No one wants to experience cancer. *Our goal is to support you.*

You can expect a trusted specialist who will listen to your concerns and discuss the latest treatment options available for you to choose from. You will receive care in comfortable, nurturing spaces where your loved ones can be a part of your journey.

Your own team of experts — doctors, nurses and allied health professionals — will focus on your wellbeing. **Ask your GP for a referral to Epworth.**

The bowel cancer pathway at Epworth

Information to help you feel prepared for your next steps.

> Screening

If you are aged 50 or older, arrange a free bowel cancer screening test.

> Symptoms

Speak to your GP if you experience symptoms of bowel cancer.

> Diagnosis

Your GP can refer you to receive an endoscopy at Epworth, with access to a colonoscopy and gastroscopy performed by specialists.

> Treatment

Epworth specialists are here to help you understand your treatment options so you can make an informed choice of treatment.

> Rehabilitation

Holistic rehabilitation programs are available before, after or during treatment, tailored to your individual needs.

> After treatment

Epworth patients in remission from bowel cancer may need follow-up appointments.

Choose your Epworth bowel cancer specialist



Click
or scan the
QR code



- > Colorectal surgeons
- > Gastroenterologists
- > Radiation oncology service
- > Medical oncologists

Epworth locations for cancer care

We are Victoria's largest not-for-profit private hospital group, renowned for excellence in diagnosis, treatment, care and rehabilitation. You will find specialist wards, imaging, pathology, and more, all onsite.

Get access to:

- > Your choice of specialist and location.
- > Timely screening, investigation and diagnosis.
- > Treatment (including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted treatment and clinical trials).
- > Modern inpatient and day oncology facilities.
- > Multidisciplinary care with experts across specialties.

Epworth Eastern

1 Arnold Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
Phone 03 8807 7100

Epworth Freemasons

109 Albert Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Phone 03 9483 3833

Epworth Geelong

1 Epworth Place
Waurm Ponds VIC 3216
Phone 03 5271 7777

Epworth Richmond

89 Bridge Road
Richmond VIC 3121
Phone 03 9426 666

To become an Epworth patient, ask your GP for a referral to an Epworth specialist.



For more information about bowel cancer visit epworth.org.au/oncology

