

Media Release



To: Local
Date: December 10th 2007
Release: Bowel Screening comes to Forth Valley

The national bowel screening programme begins in Forth Valley this month. People aged between 50 and 74 years of age, registered with a GP, will be offered screening every two years.

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK after breast and lung cancer. It is the second most common cause of cancer death (10% of all cancer deaths) in men and third in women. Around 3,500 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year in Scotland. 95% of these people are over 50 years old.

The programme will include all men and women between the ages of 50 and 74 years who are registered with a GP. They will receive a Faecal Occult Blood test (FOBT) kit by post to their home address. The kit is completed at home and returned to the national Bowel Screening Centre for Scotland, which is based in Dundee at King's Cross Hospital.

An alternative kit is available for those with disabilities and a verbal explanation can be given on how to do the test kit from the Bowel Screening Centre Helpline on 0845 270 0030.

The centre tests all the completed screening kits and then notifies:

- all participants of their results
- all GP practices of positive FOBT results
- all NHS Boards of positive results requiring further investigations.

The Screening Programme aims to find bowel cancer at an early stage in people with no symptoms. The screening test looks for hidden blood in the bowel motion, as this may suggest a higher chance of bowel cancer.

Results will be issued within one week. Most people will receive a negative result which means that no blood was found in their stool. If someone is found to have a positive result, then they will be referred to Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary for further assessment and may be offered a colonoscopy if appropriate.

“There is a 90% chance of treating bowel cancer successfully if the disease is detected early enough through screening. The programme has the potential to reduce deaths from bowel cancer by 15% which means that it could prevent 150 deaths from bowel cancer each year in Scotland.” said Wilson Hendry, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon.

Forth Valley NHS Board

Carseview House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4SW,
Telephone 01786 463031 Fax 01786 470984
E-mail yourhealthservice@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk
www.nhsforthvalley.com

Forth Valley NHS Board is the common name for Forth Valley Health Board

Anyone experiencing symptoms of bowel cancer (listed below) should contact their GP immediately.

--ends--

Notes to editors

1. More information about the Bowel Cancer Screening programme can be found at <http://www.bowelscreening.scot.nhs.uk>
2. People aged between 50 and 74 in Forth Valley will be called randomly over the next two years, so people should not worry if they have not been called immediately. People should make sure they are registered with a GP and that their GP has their correct postal address.
3. Risk factors for Bowel Cancer include:
 - Obesity
 - Lack of physical exercise
 - Poor diet
 - Smoking
4. **Signs and symptoms:**

Change of Bowel Habit - a recent persistent change which lasts for a few weeks without returning to normal such as

- going to the loo, or trying to go, several more times than is normal for you
- looser, more diarrhoea-like motions
- especially important if accompanied by bleeding from the bottom

Rectal Bleeding - which persists without an obvious reason like straining, sore bottom, lumps and itching. Bleeding from the back passage persistently without any of these symptoms should be investigated

Lumps in the tummy which can be felt by the doctor

Severe colicky tummy pain which comes on suddenly and persists

For further information please contact Communications Department on 01786 457243