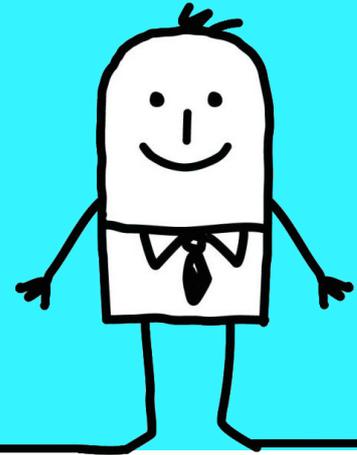


Health Matters Assistance Programme

Employee Support Bulletin April 2014

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month April 1 – April 30, 2014



Bowel cancer is also referred to as colorectal, colon or rectal cancer. Nearly all bowel cancers develop in the large bowel - two-thirds of these are in the colon and one-third in the rectum. Most bowel cancers develop from polyps which are usually non-cancerous and, once detected, can be removed easily if caught early enough.

Symptoms of bowel cancer

The symptoms of bowel (colorectal) cancer can be:

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
- A change in bowel habit lasting for 3 weeks or more especially to looser or runny poo
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason

A pain or lump in your tummy

You might experience one, some, all of the above or no symptoms at all. Remember most symptoms will not be bowel cancer.

If you are worried about any symptoms that you think might be caused by bowel cancer, make an appointment with your doctor.

Just remember you'll not be wasting anyone's time by getting checked out. If it isn't serious, you'll put your mind at rest. If it's bowel cancer, early detection can make all the difference. Over 90% who are diagnosed at the earliest stage are successfully treated. So a trip to your doctor could save your life.

Although the exact cause of bowel cancer is unknown, there are certain factors that may increase your risk.

Gender and age

Bowel cancer affects both men and women. In the UK, around 95% of cases occur in people over the age of 50

Family history

People with a first degree relative (such as mother, father, brother, sister, child) under 45 or with two or more first degree relatives with bowel cancer may be considered for further testing

Diet and lifestyle

An inactive lifestyle and a poor diet that is low in fresh fruit and vegetables may increase the risk of bowel cancer. A high intake of red and processed meat, smoking and excess alcohol may increase the risk

Other conditions

People with diabetes, a history of Crohn's disease in the large bowel, or ulcerative colitis, or who have had previous polyps removed, may also be at an increased risk.

Your HMAP is available to support you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A confidential* counselling and information service on hand when you need it.

Call us on Freephone 0800 988 8809

www.hmap-hub.co.uk