

## ENGAGEMENT

### Blog – Physical health: Bowel Cancer (young person)

The following blog has been prepared by TAL. It is available to use in white-label format for communications and is designed to provide information on positive ways to support physical health.

-BLOG-

#### What every young person needs to know about bowel cancer

**[DURING JUNE]** June is Bowel Cancer Awareness month – an important reminder for those over 45 to ensure they participate in the [National Bowel Cancer Screening Program](#). While the focus for the public health campaign is on older people, it's also important to consider the impact bowel cancer can have on younger people.

**[ALL YEAR]** Did you know that bowel cancer can affect everyone – not just older people? While the focus on bowel cancer for public health campaigns is on older people, it's also important to consider the impact bowel cancer can have on younger people.

#### Bowel cancer affects everyone

It's a common misconception that bowel cancer only affects older people. In 2024, approximately 1,708 people under the age of 50 were diagnosed with bowel cancer in Australia.<sup>1</sup> With one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world, it's concerning that there has been a significant upwards trend in the incidence of bowel cancer for younger Australians since the mid-1990s.<sup>2</sup> In Australia, it's the fifth leading cause of death overall for Australians aged 25-44.<sup>3</sup>

Our life insurance partner, TAL has seen this trend with an increase of around 15% each year over the last three years in claims for colorectal cancer by people under 55.<sup>4</sup> This trend has persisted into 2023/2024.

While the incidence may be increasing, the good news is that with early detection, survival rates are very high and there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of bowel cancer.

#### Healthy choices

Research shows that around a third of bowel cancer cases could have been prevented with healthier lifestyle choices. This includes maintaining a healthy body weight, not smoking, getting regular exercise, eating a balanced diet and limiting alcohol intake.

We all know that a healthy diet has many benefits for overall health but there are some specific modifications that can be made to the food you eat to help reduce your risk of bowel cancer. A

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<sup>1</sup> Bowel Cancer Australia. (2022). *Bowel Cancer Facts*

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Colorectal and other digestive-tract cancers*

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Deaths in Australia*

<sup>4</sup> Claims statistics based on total number of accepted claims by that were decided on by TAL Life Limited between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022. A claim is decided on when a decision is reached as to whether or not the claim is payable.

balanced diet, which includes plenty of fibre through a variety of fruit and vegetables, while limiting red and processed meat, will help reduce your risk and keep you healthy. For some suggested simple healthy recipes visit the [TAL HeartChecker](#) website.

### **Know your family history**

While there are many things you can do to help protect yourself against bowel cancer, there are some things that you have no control over. Around one third of the people who are diagnosed with bowel cancer have a family history or a hereditary condition which increases their risk.<sup>1</sup> If this is the case for you, it's important to speak with your doctor who can assess your personal level of risk and provide advice on lifestyle changes or arrange screening if required.

### **Checking in**

Even if you're young, fit and healthy, and with no family history, it's still possible to get bowel cancer. If you notice symptoms which may include a change in your bowel habits, rectal bleeding, frequent cramps or abdominal pain, it's important to make an appointment with your doctor to discuss your concerns.

**-ENDS-**

**DISCLAIMER** [please add to your post]

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