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Take advantage of lifesaving test

Cancer nurse specialists at South Tyneside District Hospital April are highlighting the importance of bowel cancer screening to improve early diagnosis of the disease.

Bowel cancer is the UK's second biggest cancer killer but it is treatable and curable, especially if diagnosed early. Bowel cancer research charity, Bowel Cancer UK, is using Bowel Cancer Awareness Month this April to focus on screening which can detect the disease early, before any symptoms appear, when it is easier to treat. Nearly 98% of people will survive bowel cancer for five years or more if it is detected at the earliest stage, compared with 7% when diagnosed at the latest.

If you are registered with a GP and aged 60-74, you receive a free NHS bowel cancer screening test in the post every two years. However, at the moment, in some areas of the UK only a third of those who receive a test in the post complete it.

Jane Barnes, cancer nurse specialist with South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Taking part in the bowel cancer screening programme is the best way to get diagnosed early and can save lives. It is vitally important to complete the test, otherwise, you are missing out on chance to detect bowel cancer early when it is easier to treat. It can also prevent bowel cancer from developing in the first place by picking up non-cancerous growths, known as polyps, which could become cancerous in the future."

It is also important to be aware of the symptoms which can include:

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
- A change in bowel habit lasting three weeks or more
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- A pain or lump in your tummy

Other health problems can cause similar symptoms and most people won't have bowel cancer but if you do have one or more of the symptoms, or if things just don't feel right, go to see your GP.



Bowel Cancer Awareness will be the topic at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's next Medicine for Members event at 2.30pm on Tuesday, April 25th, in the Lecture Theatre in the Education Centre at South Tyneside District Hospital. Refreshments will be available from 2pm. Numbers are limited so please contact the Membership Office on 0191 2024121 or email membershipoffice.stft@stft.nhs.uk for tickets.

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Pictured above: Cancer nurse specialists Teresa Liddle and Jane Barnes are spreading the word this April about the importance of bowel cancer screening

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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