



LIVING WELL



Bowel Cancer Australia

BEYOND BOWEL CANCER

living well

**Bowel Cancer Australia has produced this booklet to help people with a very important part of their bowel cancer journey – the recovery.**

This booklet provides the information and support that you need to become an expert in your own recovery pathway, to solve day-to-day problems and point you in the right direction for further help, if required. 'Living Well' covers the physical changes and emotional challenges as well as what the individual can do to assist in their own rehabilitation.

It acknowledges the reality of a changed life but provides practical options for managing it.

This booklet forms part of our patient information series which are all available on the Bowel Cancer Australia website – [bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org)

**This booklet has been produced by  
Bowel Cancer Australia with support from:**



**Bayer**

Bowel Cancer Australia maintains editorial control over content within this booklet.

Thank you to our UK charity partner, Beating Bowel Cancer, for permission to edit and reproduce this booklet and to Bowel Cancer Australia's Medical Advisory Board and 'Love My Family' Community members for their contributions.

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**Recovery from bowel cancer often has its own set of challenges, not least the length of time it may take, especially if you are still trying to make sense of everything that has happened to you. It is important to note that there will be psychological as well as physical challenges!**

Your focus becomes the day-to-day business of improving your health and trying to regain a sense of normality. You are becoming the expert of your body, developing new routines and skills to cope with the recent unexpected changes in your health. You may also have to find new ways of living and working with the side effects of your operation, chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

As your health and strength return, so will your confidence in managing your own health. This booklet has been designed to help you understand what to expect in your own journey, whatever stage of bowel cancer you have.

If you have advanced cancer that has spread outside the bowel or to other organs in the body (known as metastases) you may have another oncology or surgical pathway which will change this routine pathway.



"Imagine a roller coaster. Some of you will find this an exciting and thrilling image; others of you - like me - will find it terrifying and beyond belief that anyone in their right mind would willingly subject themselves to the torment of being transported at high speed and with great discomfort in this manner.

However, I have chosen this image to represent the process of the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. On a roller coaster, you will be strapped in and sent off into the terror, knowing that there is nothing you can do about it until you emerge, wobbly and battered at the other end.

You manage by getting your head down and dealing with it as best you can at the time. It is only afterwards, when you are on solid ground again, that you can look back with amazement and view what you have experienced and marvel at your courage."

*Excerpt from 'After the Treatment Finishes - Then What?' by Dr Peter Harvey, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust*

# worries about the cancer coming back

**We know that the biggest fear of many bowel cancer patients is that your cancer will come back in the bowel, or spread to other parts of your body. You are not unique in this. Many people describe how they become anxious before follow up appointments, and that going back for clinic appointments and waiting for test results can be very stressful.**

Your specialist team will help you understand what your own risk of the cancer coming back might be, based on your original diagnosis and the size and spread of the cancer at that time. The regular blood tests and other investigations at each milestone of your follow up pathway are designed to detect early signs of recurrent disease, and your specialist team will act quickly to treat any signs of the disease coming back. They may also suggest how you can reduce the risk of this happening, by making some simple changes to your diet, lifestyle and daily activity levels. This is part of your care planning process, and you should be involved in it and share your thoughts and feelings about what you want to achieve during your recovery pathway.

You will have contact with your specialist team at regular intervals, and these will gradually decrease in frequency over the next 5 - 7 years, as you become well again. These contacts are very important. Early recurrent disease is picked up more often by routine tests than by signs and symptoms you may notice yourself. If there are problems identified in these tests or at your consultations, it will trigger the referrals you need for further investigation and treatment.

You can also contact your GP to highlight any problems or concerns that affect your quality of life or any unusual or unexpected changes which may need to be followed up in between your regular clinic appointments.



# worries about the cancer coming back

When you have been diagnosed with any kind of cancer, it is natural to think that any new ache or pain, tiredness or unexpected change in your body must be a sign of new disease, especially in the first few weeks and months following your treatment. Recovery can take several months and there may be periods when you have good days and bad days in that time.

We also know that it is very common to have a changed bowel habit, and perhaps some tiredness and discomfort, for several weeks after bowel surgery. For most people, this gradually settles down as you start to heal and become more mobile and independent again.

Ask your specialist what to expect, and how long the symptoms are likely to last. You also need to know what to do if you find you have problems that are affecting your ability to cope with your day-to-day routines or if you notice any new symptoms. It is also worth discussing these points with your GP and your specialist.

Most symptoms can be explained and treated easily with simple medications or other treatments. Other important signs and symptoms that may need further investigation include:

- Continuing pain that doesn't go away with usual painkillers.
- Unexplained lumps, bumps or swellings.
- Unexplained change in normal bowel habit that lasts for six weeks or more – especially if you are waking up in the night with loose stools.
- Unexplained loss of appetite, weight loss or increasing girth.
- Any new bleeding from your back passage (or in urine).
- Any unexplained shortness of breath or cough which lasts for three weeks or more.
- Any other unexplained symptoms or changes which last more than a few weeks.



# recovery and care pathway

# your role in your own care pathway

**Depending upon where you live, your hospital team will ensure that you continue to be followed up in the most appropriate way for you, dependent upon your diagnosis and personal circumstances.**

They will clarify what you are able to do for yourself, or with the help of your family and friends. It may help to identify where there may be some problems or worries about being able to manage at home without extra support. Speaking to your GP can help you to access additional help and assistance.

If you have been diagnosed with advanced cancer, are having on-going treatment with intensive monitoring or lots of problems with symptoms, you may find that you follow a more intensive pathway which involves doctors and nurses from other specialist teams in hospital and in the community.

Ask your specialists for a treatment summary so you can keep a record. This will give you enough information to make the right decisions about your recovery needs.

You will have regular contact with your hospital team in your recovery pathway, and have all the recommended standard tests to monitor for signs of recurrent disease. Depending on your circumstances, you may need extra appointments for other investigations or with other specialists to help you maintain your health, independence and quality of life.



**Getting involved with your care planning and finding out about your local healthcare and social networks can really help your recovery. In the following pages, we offer some information about how you might be able to overcome common problems as you gradually re-establish some good routines for getting back to health and living well.**

Once you have finished your treatment, you might like to consider the following when assessing your own healthcare needs:

- wound healing
- pain levels
- changes in bowel habit
- eating and drinking
- energy levels and sleep quality
- mobility and physical activity
- coping at home with day-to-day activities
- going back to work
- personal and family relationships
- emotions, fears and coping strategies
- managing your finances
- any other problems or concerns.

You might feel that you should put up with the side effects of your treatment, and there may be times when something does not feel right in your own body, but it is too difficult to explain this to someone who doesn't understand how you are feeling.

Your follow up appointments with your specialists are important opportunities to share how you are thinking and feeling about your health after your treatment. At these appointments, you will:

- Discuss your test results.
- Agree plans to investigate or treat problems with symptoms or changes in your body.
- Be signposted to other local support networks and charities, including peer to peer support from Bowel Cancer Australia's 'Love My Family' Community, for example.
- Be referred to other services to help you manage other non-cancer symptoms or problems.

Lifestyle choices influence your health and wellbeing for the future, and potentially help to prevent the cancer recurring. Because these are so important, it is likely that they will be included in your recovery care plan:

- Following a prudent diet that contains a high intake of vegetables, poultry and fish rather than red meats, refined grains, sweets and desserts.
- Making sure that you get at least 30 minutes of physical exercise, at least five days a week.
- Keeping your weight within a healthy range.

**You should be told the name and contact details of the person who is going to arrange and coordinate your follow up care. They can provide advice and arrange tests and access back to your specialist team if this is needed.**

**If the contact details are not clear, do ask for clarification.**

# treatment summary record

## An example of the key information to include on your Treatment Summary Record

Hospital: ..... Name: ..... DOB: .....

Medicare Number: ..... Surgeon: ..... GP: .....

Address: .....  
.....  
.....

Operation: ..... Date: ..... Staging: .....

Adjuvant Chemotherapy: Yes / No: ..... Colonoscopy Due: .....

Referred For Surveillance By: .....

Commenced Surveillance On: ..... Stage Of Pathway: .....

Five Year / Seven Year Surveillance Plan											Rectal Cancer Only		
	6 Weeks	3 Mths	6 Mths	9 Mths	1 Year	18 Mths	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	
Dates													
Blood Test													
Scans													
Colonoscopy													

# emotions and feelings after treatment

It is possible that you feel that you are recovering well most of the time, but some days might seem empty or lonely if you are at home on your own, leaving you feeling low. Many people talk to us about a feeling of ‘the circus leaving town’ in the days and weeks after treatment finishes. As your family and friends start to return to their own daily routines, it can be hard for you to fit back into your old life, making you think about everything that has happened to you.

Everyone is different, but some specific worries seem to be more common for people who have had treatment for bowel cancer and it is important to recognise them. It takes time to learn how to manage with changed bowel habit, or a new stoma, for example. For a lot of people the worries about being away from home and being able to find a toilet in time, or what to wear for fears of leakage and their stoma bag showing, can prevent them from going out or meeting with friends. Perhaps you don't have an appetite yet, or are feeling tired or having trouble sleeping, and this is also making you feel low.

Differences in the way your body feels and works since your treatment often bring worries about how you look and feel about yourself. It is very common to worry about how your partner or those closest to you will react, especially if you are conscious of scars, a new stoma or perhaps surgery that has dramatically changed how your body looks now.

Your specialist understands how this might feel and can help you to identify the things you are most worried about. By understanding what you need to make a strong recovery, they can help to make sure that you receive the help and support you need at the right time and in the right way.

Most people say that living beyond cancer has given them a greater appreciation of life, helped them to understand what is most important to them, or to discover stronger spiritual or religious beliefs. No one can predict how things will be for you, but the more open and honest you are about how you are feeling, the easier it will be for others to support you.

For more information about the kind of support that might help you, please see our flyer ‘Providing Patient Services’.



# disturbed sleep and fatigue

**Illness, treatment and surgery can all take their toll on your energy levels, making you feel very tired and lethargic. Worry and uncertainty associated with your cancer diagnosis are likely to have given you several sleepless nights, and spending time in hospital can often disrupt your sleeping patterns too. For cancer patients, it's not unusual to find that this can be the start of longer term problems with low energy levels and a really deep fatigue that can last for many months after treatment finishes.**

Tiredness may be linked to other problems too, such as anaemia, or untreated symptoms like pain or other changes in your body. Stress and anxiety can also take their toll and make it difficult to get to sleep or wake you up again in the small hours of the morning.

Fatigue can affect the way you think and feel, and even make it more difficult to do things you usually enjoy, like reading or watching TV.

It can affect your mood and your relationships with other people, so that you find yourself getting impatient with yourself and others, or find that you are getting upset and tearful over small things. You might even find that you avoid spending time with friends or family because it feels too exhausting. This can slow down your recovery and affect how well you cope in the future.

**Fatigue can respond really well to certain clever strategies which help you build up your stamina and find ways of conserving energy. You might also be able to take part in a support program that helps you to gradually increase your level of activity. Ask your specialist for details.**



Over time, stress and anxiety can lead to depression, and this is more common than people realise. It may not be obvious at first that this is affecting you, although you may find yourself wondering why things don't seem right. This can have a profound effect on your energy levels, so it's important to be honest about how you are feeling with your doctor. He/she will be able to listen objectively, offer constructive advice and perhaps arrange some simple tests to find out if there's an underlying problem causing the tiredness that can be treated.

# activity and exercise

**People recover much more quickly and have fewer complications from their treatment if they think positively about their health and keep active throughout the day, rather than spending long periods of time sitting or lying still.**

The physiotherapy team may already have given you some exercises to help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and the muscles in your abdomen and lower back. These exercises are important for regaining bowel control and increasing your strength and stamina.

Regular daily exercise is thought to be one of the most important features of staying healthy and preventing recurrence of diseases like bowel cancer, as well as helping to boost energy levels and improving how well you sleep at night. This can be as simple as walking briskly for 20 – 30 minutes every day. Remember though, whatever you do, a little bit of advance planning is always useful. For example, knowing where the toilets are, or taking some spare clothing with you in case of unexpected accidents.

Housework and other more strenuous physical activities can be gradually re-introduced into your daily routine, although it is important to remember the advice you have been given about more strenuous activities. Driving and lifting heavy objects can strain healing muscles and skin.

There are many excellent rehabilitation and exercise programs available. Your GP, specialist or your local sports centre will have more information about local activities, support groups and exercise classes where there is also an opportunity to meet other people and make some new friends.



**Along with regular exercise, a healthy, nutritious diet that includes a wide range of fresh vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, beans, good quality protein and essential oils is an integral part of your recovery, and possibly a key factor in preventing future ill health and the cancer returning.**

Whatever your preference or specialist diet instructions, keep eating regularly. Smaller portions eaten in lighter meals or snacks throughout the day may suit you better than the more traditional three or four bigger meals, especially if you are still experiencing problems with an unpredictable bowel pattern and poor appetite.

Drinking water will help to keep your stools soft and prevent constipation and dehydration. Tea, coffee and other caffeine based drinks can increase bowel activity, causing cramps and discomfort. Fizzy drinks and some alcohol can irritate the lining of the bowel, causing bloating and sometimes diarrhoea.

Healthy bacteria in the gut can be affected by surgery, radiotherapy, antibiotics and other medicines. An overgrowth of any one group of organisms in the digestive system can also lead to symptoms of indigestion, discomfort and changing bowel habit. For this reason, many enhanced recovery programs now include probiotic supplements to help restore a natural balance of the good bacteria and reduce symptoms.

For more information about diet after bowel cancer, see our booklet **'Diet & Nutrition - Your Recipe for Recovery'**.



**There is plenty of evidence that lifestyle choices have a direct impact on our health and wellbeing, and may increase our risk of developing certain diseases and illness. Having had treatment for bowel cancer, you may feel that you want to do as much as you possibly can to improve your general health and to reduce the risk of your cancer coming back.**

You might want to consider:

- Giving up smoking tobacco.
- Avoiding drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time (more than four units).
- Getting 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day and avoiding sitting for long periods.
- Reducing the amount of processed foods in your diet, especially refined ingredients, with a high fat and/or sugar content, and high levels of preservatives.
- Increasing the amount of fresh foods you eat, including fruit and vegetables with a variety of colours and textures to get the widest possible range of nutrients.
- Including small portions of high quality protein in your diet every day to help with healing and repair: fish, white meats and small portions of lean red meat, or soya and tofu if you are vegetarian or vegan.
- Water is very important for your digestion, and to avoid becoming dehydrated in warm weather/ environments or after strenuous exercise.
- Yoga, T'ai Chi and other gentle exercises encourage deep breathing, help to relieve stress and anxiety, and improve some common symptoms linked to them - including pain and problems with low energy, concentration or sleeping.



# changed body image

**Surgery and treatment can take their toll emotionally, psychologically and physically. Most people manage to find ways to try and deal with everything they have been through. Wounds heal, leaving scars that often only you will see. But there may be other changes in how your body looks and behaves that you still have difficulty accepting, and these unexpected feelings can leave you feeling anxious or vulnerable.**

Like many others, you might also be worrying about how other people might see you, or that you still don't feel able to talk openly with others about your cancer experience because of their own fears or assumptions.

## **Who else can help?**

Local support groups can be a great source of support and encouragement for people who are just starting to begin their recovery pathway, and are often held in the local hospital where you have had your treatment.

Bowel Cancer Australia's patient to patient support network can provide a lifeline for people who have

been diagnosed with bowel cancer, and who are adjusting to life after their treatment has been completed.

Bowel Cancer Australia's nurse advisers are experienced in supporting people who have had treatment for bowel cancer, and can answer many questions or direct you to find the help you might need.

Your specialist or GP can also refer you to therapists and support services who can work with you on a one to one basis if you feel it would help.



# changes in bowel habit

**Diarrhoea, constipation, wind, unpredictable bowel patterns, and problems with stomas (both permanent and temporary) are the most common questions posted on our patient forums at [bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums)**

Many changes in bowel habit are caused by a change in the length and shape of your colon after surgery. A shorter bowel means less time for water to be reabsorbed from the faeces (poo) as it travels through, so bowel movements can seem very loose and watery. Over time however, the body can adapt to these changes, and so it is often only a temporary problem.

Other problems are caused by changes in the shape and ability of the bowel to hold the poo once it reaches the end of the bowel, especially if the rectum has been removed or affected in some way by surgery or radiotherapy treatment.

Small nerves that help to control the movement of the bowel and the muscles of the anus and bladder can be affected during surgery and this can cause

problems with leaking of urine and soiling. This may only be a short term issue for you, but in some cases, it can become a longer term problem and may need professional help and treatment to manage effectively.

Pelvic floor exercises, relaxation, regular activity and avoiding sitting still for long periods can all help to improve the strength and control of the muscles in your abdomen and pelvis. Controlling your diet and taking medicines to change the consistency of the poo can also help to make bowel movements more predictable and comfortable to manage.

For more information on changing bowel habits, see our patient forums:

[bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums).



## **Easy Access to Public Toilets**

The National Public Toilet Map shows the location of public and private public toilet facilities across Australia.

Details of toilet facilities can also be found along major travel routes and for shorter journeys as well. Useful information is provided about each toilet, such as location, opening hours, availability of baby change rooms, accessibility for people with disabilities and the details of other nearby toilets.

Visit [toiletmap.gov.au](http://toiletmap.gov.au) or call 1800 990 646 for more information.

## Frequently asked patient questions about changes in bowel habit:

**Q: I have been having problems with constipation since my treatment.**

**A:** Constipation can be caused by not drinking enough water, or by not eating enough food to help keep the bowel moving. It can also be caused by not getting enough gentle exercise every day, and spending long periods of time sitting still. Increasing the amount of fibre in your diet from fruit, vegetables and whole grains or gentle medicines can also help to keep the stools soft and comfortable to pass. Speak to your specialist or GP about this if you are worried.

**Q: I've got a new stoma but I am still passing mucus and feeling like I need to go to the toilet.**

**A:** This sensation is normal, as the bowel below the stoma is still producing mucus to keep it healthy. There may also be some faeces left in the lower bowel from before your operation (especially if you had emergency surgery).

Sit on the toilet and allow anything in your rectum to drain away when you feel the need but avoid pushing or straining. This should gradually settle down and be less obvious. If it doesn't, or if you start to notice any fresh bleeding or increase in amounts of mucus, speak to your specialist as soon as you can.

**Q: I've recently had bowel cancer surgery and I'm still bleeding from my bottom.**

**A:** This kind of bleeding is common immediately after surgery, usually caused by blood left over from surgery. It should gradually reduce and stop altogether. You should speak to your specialist immediately if the bleeding increases, if you have new, unexplained pain over your operation site, or feel unwell/have a fever in the first few weeks following your surgery.

**Q: I am still having problems with diarrhoea and wind since my treatment.**

**A:** Diarrhoea and wind are common after having a large part of your large bowel (colon/rectum) removed, as less water is reabsorbed from the poo as it travels towards the anus. Some foods or medicines can also make the problem worse, e.g. caffeine in tea and coffee, gas in fizzy drinks, and chemicals in some beers and wines. Eating quickly, not chewing your food thoroughly and swallowing air when you are eating all lead to problems with wind, cramping or bloating.

Infections in the bowel can also cause problems with wind, pain and diarrhoea, but these can be easily treated by your GP.

**Sex is a sensitive subject for people under the most ordinary circumstances. Almost half of all men who have had treatment for bowel cancer find that they have problems associated with both interest in sex and performance as a consequence of their diagnosis and treatment.**

There may be physical issues such as lack of energy, physical discomfort after surgery, and/or the fear (on both sides) that you may do more harm than good! There may also be more complex psychological problems that can affect how easy it is to initiate sexual activity.

It can only help to talk to your partner about how you might still be able to enjoy an intimate relationship. You can have fun making small changes to favourite positions or finding other ways of giving pleasure without putting pressure on newly healing wounds or a stoma. Low lighting and experimenting with keeping on some clothing may also help if you are self-conscious about scars or a stoma or unpredictable leaks.

As a result of surgery or radiotherapy, you might find that you are having problems achieving or keeping an erection. This is again much more

common than you might expect, and happens as a result of inflammation and damage to tiny nerve endings and blood vessels in the area around the pelvis. These side effects of treatment are often short-lived and gradually disappear over the course of a few weeks or months, but occasionally it can become something that remains a problem.

If you experience long-term difficulties or have concerns about intimate issues, there are things that can be done to help with the support of your GP or specialist. There are medications and other techniques that can help to strengthen and sustain an erection, and many practical tips and advice to help cope with these new challenges and find new ways to achieve satisfaction and intimacy with your partner.



# intimate relationships: women

**For women who have had treatment for bowel cancer, there is also potential for difficulties and anxiety around intimate relationships and sexual intercourse which, if not addressed early, can undermine your recovery and may sometimes lead to other problems with personal relationships.**

Surgery, some chemotherapy drugs and radiotherapy can affect the tiny nerve endings and blood vessels around the pelvis, causing local inflammation and swelling, changing the sensations you can feel. This is often only a temporary problem that will gradually settle down, but occasionally there may be some longer term loss of sensitivity or numbness in and around the pelvis.

Being self-conscious about how your body looks after surgery (with or without a stoma) is only natural and it may be worth experimenting with low lighting and keeping on some clothing during sex. There may be practical reasons such as low energy levels and discomfort from scar tissue that can affect how you feel about wanting to have sex. For example, if you have had some of your rectum removed, full penetrative sex may be very uncomfortable for several weeks, or even months, after your treatment is completed. It often does become less uncomfortable as healing takes place, and it may be that you and your partner can find new ways that give you both pleasure without putting pressure on yourself, or on healing wounds or stoma.

If you have had radiotherapy, there is an increased risk of vaginal dryness and tightening as a side effect of this treatment, which can make penetration and vaginal examinations uncomfortable or painful. This can be eased in a number of ways, by using intimate lubricating

gels or creams to help moisten the vagina and by gently massaging the area with your finger to keep it supple. You can try experimenting with technique and position too. A vaginal dilator may also help prevent tight bands of scar tissue forming, and keep the vagina “open” after your treatment has finished, and while you are not sexually active.

There is specialist help available if you need it from gynaecologists, for example, to talk through worries or to help find solutions to practical problems or concerns. Your GP can make the referral for you.



# changing roles and responsibilities

**Talking about cancer can be very difficult, even with people whom you know and love. How do you have a conversation about a life changing illness with someone who doesn't know how it feels to receive a cancer diagnosis?**

How can anyone else begin to understand how it feels to have experienced the treatment you have had, to suddenly find that you are no longer as independent as you would like to be, or to have concerns about how you are going to get back to ‘normal’ again?

For many people, this tiredness and dependence on others is only a temporary setback, but if you are feeling very low and vulnerable, these are

conversations that you may need to have as part of your recovery pathway. Knowing where to start, or finding the opportunity and confidence to have them will be easier with help and support of your healthcare team.

Find out how Bowel Cancer Australia and our patient network and forums can support you by visiting [bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org) or speaking with one of our Nurse Advisers (1800 555 494).



## going back to work

**Having that conversation with your employer can be fraught with uncertainty and anxiety around having taken time off work through being ill or attending appointments. Perhaps you are worried that your job no longer looks as safe as it was before. You may be worried about going back into that role with reduced health or practical day-to-day routines that are not flexible enough to allow you to take extra time for regular toilet breaks.**

Your human resources manager should be able to support you in gradually getting back to your full hours. He/she can also advise you about what will happen if your changed personal circumstances have affected your ability to continue in the role you had previously.

If you don't work, your family may now expect you to start doing more around the house and for yourself, taking up some of your old responsibilities. It may be worth having a

conversation about how you will gradually be able to do more as you regain your strength and stamina.

There are several sources of support to help you understand what your employment rights are and which welfare benefits and support may be available to you.

For more information please see our Emotional Support: Financial Support and Practical Support web pages at [bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org).



## finding your own local support network

**If your local hospital does not run a support group, staff there may be able to give you details of other, non-specific cancer support groups that meet regularly.**

These groups are as much about having fun and finding friendship as sitting around talking about cancer. They can be a source of moral support and really useful tips about coping with the practicalities of living through and beyond a cancer diagnosis.

If a face to face group is not for you, then do consider joining us online at [bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org/forums) where there is a very active community of peer support for both patients and relatives at all stages of a bowel cancer journey. The forums are moderated by Bowel Cancer Australia's nurses.

Our 'Love My Family' Community support network is also a great source of support, by telephone or email. We can often match you up with someone who has a story very similar to your own and who can provide their own insight and support for you on a more private basis, if this works better for you. To be matched with one of our volunteer supporters, please contact the Nurse Advisers on 1800 555 494 or online at [bowelcanceraustralia.org/lovemyfamily](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org/lovemyfamily)



## About Bowel Cancer Australia

Bowel Cancer Australia is a national charity, dedicated to raising awareness of the disease and to providing support and information for those affected by bowel cancer. Being diagnosed with bowel cancer will come as a terrible shock to most people. Whilst you will receive all your medical help and support from your healthcare professionals, you may also like to contact the charity to talk to other patients in a similar situation, speak to a nurse or nutritionist adviser, or receive further information about any aspect of your disease.

Patients and their families contact us at every stage of their bowel cancer journey, but many find us of particular help and comfort when they are having a break from treatment or have finished treatment, and are no longer having that day-to-day support from the hospital.

## 'Love My Family' Community

The charity runs a national patient-to-patient network for people with bowel cancer or relatives of bowel cancer patients. We can put people in touch with each other, by phone or email, matching them by age, geographical region, bowel cancer stage or treatment received. Talking to someone else who has been through a similar experience can be hugely reassuring, and many patients who initially contact the Community for support go on to become members, providing support to others.

## Nurse & Nutritionist Advisory Services

You will have a number of contacts at your local hospital who can answer specific questions about your treatment, and you should not be afraid to ask for help if you are worried at any stage of your bowel cancer journey. The charity also provides a Nurse and Nutritionist Advisory Service, which you may wish to call if you can't get hold of your assigned nurse or if you have any other questions or worries.

## Information Resources

The charity publishes a range of patient information, all available to order free of charge from the charity.

Please call **1800 555 494** or visit **[www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org)** for further information.



**Bowel Cancer Australia**

*Love.*

BOWEL CANCER AUSTRALIA

## I would like to support the work of Bowel Cancer Australia.

Your donation will not only help us to save lives, but also improve the health and wellbeing of those living with bowel cancer.

Please accept my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (donations over \$2 are tax-deductible).

My cheque / money order is enclosed (payable to Bowel Cancer Australia).

Or please debit my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note, if you prefer to donate by phone or online, please call **1800 555 494** or visit **[www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org)**

## My contact details

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact: ☐ Post ☐ Email

Thank you on behalf of Bowel Cancer Australia.

Privacy statement: Your name will be placed on our mailing list and, from time to time, we will send you information about Bowel Cancer Australia. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box ☐. Please call 1800 555 494 should you require any further information.

Bowel Cancer Australia is a national charity working to reduce the impact of bowel cancer in our society through advocacy, awareness, education, support and research. We aim to help save lives from this common cancer, Australia's second biggest cancer killer.

Charity initiatives such as Bowel Cancer Awareness Month®, BowelScreen Australia®, and the Healthy Community Program raise awareness among health professionals and the community about the importance of early detection and intervention in the successful treatment of bowel cancer.

Through our 'Love My Family' Community, we provide support, resources and advocacy for bowel cancer patients, their carers, close relatives and friends.

To do all this we rely on public support. If you would like to get involved, or make a donation, please visit our website.

**[www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org)**



Bowel Cancer Australia



Join the  
Bowel **M**ovement

### **Bowel Cancer Australia**

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