Screening saves thousands of lives each year
Cancer screening tests can help detect the disease at an early stage before symptoms have a chance to develop, and some can prevent cancer too.

In the UK, we have three national screening programmes, for breast, cervical and bowel cancers. You need to be registered with a GP to be invited for cancer screening.

Common concerns

I don’t feel or look ill, so it can’t be anything serious
When cancers are small they may not make you feel or look unwell. It is important to see your doctor if you notice any persistent or unusual changes, even if they seem insignificant at the time.

I’ve already seen the doctor about my symptoms and I don’t want to bother him/her again
If your symptoms haven’t gone away, have changed or have got worse, your doctor will want to know, so it’s worth making a new appointment. Be stubborn if your symptom is stubborn.
Early diagnosis of cancer can save lives

When cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, treatment is often more likely to be successful. So finding cancer early can make a real difference.

Key signs and symptoms

Find out about some of the possible signs and symptoms of cancer. If you develop any of these symptoms it doesn’t necessarily mean you’ve got cancer. But it’s important to see your doctor, even if you don’t think it’s serious.

There are more than 200 different types of cancer, which can cause many different symptoms. Experts agree that the symptoms in this leaflet are the most important ones to look out for and act on. It’s also a good idea to get to know your body and what’s normal for you. This will make it easier for you to notice when something is different.

If you notice any unusual or persistent changes, it’s best to get checked out by your doctor.