

17 July 2017

National bowel screening rolls out in Wairarapa

Today marks the start of bowel screening in Wairarapa, where more than 8,700 residents will be invited to participate in the programme over the next two years.

Wairarapa DHB's Chief Executive Officer, Adri Isbister, is excited to be bringing bowel screening to Wairarapa residents.

"It is a privilege to be one of the first of the District Health Boards to be launching the screening," she said. "We are very pleased with the level of public interest and expect high engagement with the programme.

"Our community has been actively involved during the various public meetings we have held, and we have a real focus on achieving an equitable reach across our local population."

The screening programme is expected to detect up to 20 cancers in the first two years that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. Finding cancers early means there is a far greater chance of them being treated.

Paul Manuel, General Surgeon and Bowel Screening Programme Endoscopy Lead, fully supports the programme.

"I am completely confident that we will make a difference with regards to the prevention and treatment of colorectal cancer in Wairarapa," he said.

Who?

The National Bowel Screening Programme is being offered to men and women aged 60 - 74 who are eligible for publicly funded healthcare.

Why?

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world. Regular bowel screening can save lives by finding cancer early when it can often be successfully treated.

What?

If you are eligible to take part, you will be sent an invitation letter, a consent form and a free bowel screening test kit. The test is done at home, and is clean and simple to do.

When?

Invitations will be posted out to the approximately 9,000 eligible 60-74 year olds over a two year period, scheduled by birthdays. Once included in the programme, participants will be invited for screening every two years.

Bowel problems? Talk to your doctor.

Common symptoms of bowel cancer may include:

- a change to your normal pattern of going to the toilet that continues for several weeks (such as diarrhoea, constipation)
- a feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely)
- blood in your bowel motion

Although these symptoms are usually caused by other conditions, it's important to get them checked by your doctor.

ENDS.

Anna Cardno

Communications Manager

Wairarapa District Health Board

anna.cardno@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz

027 205 2422