

# >> Bowel Screening Pilot Update

June 2013



>> Bruce Ogilvy is one of 60 people found to have bowel cancer during the first 12 months of the pilot.

## 'Luckiest man' urges others to take the bowel screening test.

Takapuna man Bruce Ogilvy calls himself the luckiest man in the country after the free bowel screening test picked up his cancer early, when it could be successfully treated.

The healthy and active 59-year old had no signs or symptoms of anything wrong at all.

"But my initial test at home came back positive and a follow-up colonoscopy showed cancer. I had surgery and chemotherapy and now I feel great. I am so pleased I took part in the bowel screening programme," says Mr Ogilvy.

Bruce Ogilvy has a simple message for everyone living in the region who is eligible to take part in the pilot.

"Take the test! Just do it! It is the best thing I have ever done - I feel like I have won lotto," he says.



>> Staff at the Bowel Screening Pilot's dedicated endoscopy unit at Waitakere Hospital. Surgeons are performing 50 colonoscopies a week on screening participants.

The \$24 million Bowel Screening Pilot is being run in the Waitemata DHB area until 2015. People aged 50 to 74 years who live in the DHB area are eligible to take part. See your doctor now if you have any bowel symptoms that concern you.

**For further information about the Bowel Screening Programme please call 0800 924 432 or visit the website [www.bowelscreeningwaitemata.co.nz](http://www.bowelscreeningwaitemata.co.nz).**

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## Dear friends and supporters of the Bowel Screening Pilot,

We are pleased to let you know the first year official figures for the Bowel Screening Pilot have just been released, showing a positive start to the four year programme.

International evidence shows that a bowel screening programme can significantly reduce the incidence of bowel cancer and the number of people who die from the disease, through early diagnosis and interventions.

The Waitemata pilot will provide essential information that will help determine whether a bowel screening programme should be rolled out nationally.

Ministry of Health data from January to December 2012 shows:

- 54,450 people were invited to take part in the pilot and 29,522 people (54%) returned a correctly completed kit that could be tested by the laboratory.
- 2216 participants (7.2%) who correctly completed their test kit tested positive for blood in their sample.
- 1418 people attended a colonoscopy through the Bowel Screening Pilot.
- 60 people participating in the pilot were diagnosed with cancer.

Not all population groups are participating in equal measure. Maori have an average participation rate of 43.4%, compared to 52% for Asian, 25.2% for Pacific and 57.2% for other population groups.

Our first external evaluation reports have identified the reasons for lower participation in the Maori and Pacific populations, and our advisory groups are assisting us to develop strategies which make the programme more acceptable to these groups.

More than 60 percent of the cancers detected during the first year of the pilot are early stage bowel cancers, which is a higher percentage than is seen in a normal clinical setting where people have symptoms. Cancers are being found in people who had no signs or symptoms to suggest there could be a problem with their bowel.

The good news is that earlier stage cancers can be treated more successfully, and the outcomes for patients are generally very good.

We would like to extend our thanks to all of you who have supported and promoted the bowel screening programme. The support shown to us from General Practitioners, PHO's, community groups and leaders has definitely contributed to the success of the programme so far.

We look forward to your continued support.

Warm wishes on behalf of the Bowel Screening team,

**Gaye Tozer**  
Programme Manager

**Mike Hulme-Moir**  
Clinical Director