

# Happy Holiday Season!

From the Bowel Screening Pilot Team



## Bowel screening - just do it!



Devonport woman Nicky Sumicz says she has 'dodged a bullet' after finding out she had cancer through taking part in the BowelScreening programme.

The fit and healthy 52 year old Accountant and business owner is the mother of two teenage boys. She says when her bowel screening test kit arrived she left it sitting on the bench for a few weeks as bowel cancer was not something she had ever contemplated.

"We have no family history and I had no symptoms at all. When my doctor phoned and said the result was positive because there were traces of blood in the sample I was not worried at all," she says. However during a colonoscopy her surgeon discovered polyps and two cancers. Within three weeks she had been operated on and had 35 centimetres of her bowel removed.

"Taking the test quite possibly saved my life. Luckily, because the cancer was found so early it hadn't spread, so I didn't need any chemotherapy. Bowel cancer is not a 'sexy cancer' so no-one talks about it but if it's found early, like in my case, it can be cured," she says.



**"The great news is the pilot is finding cancers at an early stage when they are just beginning to grow, and before they have had the chance to spread. Approximately 60% of the cancers we are seeing through the BowelScreening programme are stage 1 and 2, which means a much higher chance of being cured by surgery alone. The patient doesn't need chemotherapy which is a huge benefit. Bowel screening is not only saving lives, it is costing the country less for treatment."**

Mike Hulme-Moir, BowelScreening Clinical Director and General and Colorectal Surgeon

## Results so far...

Latest figures show more than half of all those invited have done the test (53.16%).

Between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2014 (Round 1 and the first two quarters of Round 2), a total of 155,607 people were invited to take part and 82,724 people returned a correctly completed kit that could be tested by the lab.

5000 colonoscopies have been performed at the dedicated BowelScreening pilot endoscopy unit at Waitakere Hospital.

Bowel cancer has been found in 233 people who have done the test.

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

It is hard to believe we are nearly three-quarters of the way through the four year BowelScreening programme. It has been an exciting year with a couple of new initiatives showing real promise for achieving equity between population groups.

Data shows Pacific people are less like to participate than other population groups and the Maori participation rate is lower than Asian and Other populations. We have strengthened our relationship with primary care and together we are reaching people who haven't yet taken part in the pilot.

We are seeing great results from the inclusion of BowelScreening on the patient dashboard, with a steady stream of faxes to the coordination centre requesting test kits for people who would otherwise not have taken part.

We have also initiated 'active follow-up' and recruited staff specifically to make follow-up phone calls to Maori and Pacific people who have not responded to a test kit invitation.

We are encouraged by the success rate we have achieved in the past four months, and while we still have a way to go to achieve equity we feel confident that person-to-person contact is more effective for some people in our priority populations. The recently released BSP Monitoring Report suggests that the equity gap may be closing for both Maori and Pacific.

On behalf of all of us working in the BowelScreening programme we wish you a happy holiday season. We look forward to working with you again in 2015.

**Gaye Tozer**  
Programme Manager

**Mike Hulme-Moir**  
Clinical Director



**BowelScreening**  
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[www.BowelScreeningWaitemata.co.nz](http://www.BowelScreeningWaitemata.co.nz)

**0800 924 432**

