

## MAUREEN'S STORY from Lewisham



Maureen calls her experience of bowel cancer screening “a good news story”. She was busy arranging a party for her birthday when the FOB test “popped through the door”.

Maureen hadn't heard about the kit before but didn't see any reason not to do it:

*I've done a smear test, I've done a mammogram, why wouldn't you do it? And it's great, you know, you're getting a free test for something that you may have to pay for .*

The results of Maureen's test were 'unclear' so she was asked to do the test again. She did this and within a few days she got a letter asking her to go and see a nurse about the option of having a colonoscopy.

Despite having “no symptoms whatsoever”, Maureen was found to have bowel cancer and had to have an operation to remove it. She didn't need to have any chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

When she was first diagnosed her worry wasn't of dying but rather of how her grandchildren would cope without their “nanny”. She can see now just how lucky she was to have caught the cancer early:

*I just think I was very, very lucky because, you know, who knows what would have happened had that test not been available.*

Maureen is happy to tell others her story as they often respond: “Now you've told me all that I'll go and do it”.



**If you would like more information  
about screening for bowel cancer  
please call the  
Bowel Cancer Screening hub  
on : Freephone 0800 707 60 60**

**Developed by University College London  
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**With special thanks to all those who shared  
their experience of bowel cancer screening.**

## My Story of Bowel Cancer Screening

The experience of others who have  
completed the FOB Test.



### MONICA'S STORY From Shoot-up Hill, London



About a month after Monica turned 60 she got the FOB test in the post. She did it and sent it off. A few days later she was told that the results were unclear and was asked to do another test.

*All my friends, they had the test and they were fine. Trust me to get the call back, I had to be different.*

This time, when the results came back, Monica was asked to go and see a nurse to talk about the option of having a colonoscopy. Monica agreed to have a colonoscopy the following week.

*I was surprised that I got a positive result but I know a lot of other people have had it because I saw them all there having their colonoscopies so I wasn't sort of like alone.*

Monica had two polyps removed during the colonoscopy. They were sent away for testing and a few weeks later, Monica got a phone call to say that "everything was ok"; the polyps were not cancerous.

Monica will "definitely" do the FOB test again as the benefits of early detection are clear:

*...the Government wouldn't be wasting all this money on doing the test if they did not think that by doing the screening they could prevent a bigger problem later on . Because obviously the more hold the cancer takes, the bigger the treatment, the bigger the cost to the NHS. So if they can catch things early it's better for the person and also better for the NHS.*

### DEREK'S STORY From Stanmore



Derek had been expecting the FOB test through the post as some of his friends had already done it. He knew that doing the test was "not the nicest thing to do" but that "it is necessary".

When Derek was doing the FOB test he did admit having "an element of fear" at the back of his mind in case something was found, but knew he could only win from finding out:

*Common sense tells you that you should not be fearful of it because if they do find something then the sooner it is found the easier it is to treat.*

However, he was "shocked" when his results came back 'abnormal' and he was invited to have a colonoscopy:

*I thought I was a very fit and healthy human being. I'd never seen any blood in my faeces, I'd never noticed anything and, as far as I was concerned, I didn't have any problems, but of course it does not work like that .*

Derek agreed to the colonoscopy:

*I thought, okay, why not? If there is a problem let's get it sorted, I don't want to leave it. ... if there is something there I want to know about it, you know. Eh, because eh, there's no point in leaving it, you need to find out .*

During the colonoscopy, he "didn't feel any pain", yet had 2 large polyps removed from his bowel. Both were found to be non-cancerous (benign) and Derek was "so relieved" to get the results he almost took his wife out for a meal!

### HYACINTHS STORY From London



When Hyacinth received the FOB test she initially thought "How am I gonna do this?". She managed to work it out and realised it was "very easy; nothing to it at all".

*The only thing; imagine my business going through the post like that! {laughs} I thought those postmen having to be dealing with that sort of thing. It had to be done. But it wasn't hard to do, no.*

Hyacinth's results came back 'abnormal' and so, like Derek, she was invited to have a colonoscopy. She agreed and found the procedure to be "a similar sort of thing [as] when you go for a smear; in fact, it wasn't even as bad as that" and indeed found that "it wasn't painful at all, or anything, and it was quite dignified the way they did it because I wasn't, I didn't feel exposed or anything".

Hyacinth got the all clear from her colonoscopy to which she was "delighted". For her, completing the FOB test kit gave her "peace of mind" and she would encourage others to do the test:

*I think we should follow up these tests whenever we are asked to do them really because obviously we could treat things a bit earlier if we do find them, so yeah. ... it's good that they, they come up with these ideas, these ways of reassuring people whether anything is wrong or not ... they can pick up whatever is wrong, if something is going wrong, before it develops into something bigger...*