



Negative FIT with ongoing symptoms: your next steps

Patient information | Source check: 2026-10-15

What the result tells you

FIT checks for tiny traces of blood in poo. A negative result lowers the likelihood of bowel cancer, but some cancers and precancerous polyps do not release enough blood to be detected. It does not identify the cause of ongoing symptoms.

Arrange a review

See your GP if symptoms persist, return or worsen. If they have already lasted six weeks or longer, book now. Do not wait another six weeks after the result. Seek advice sooner for visible blood, unexplained weight loss, increasing pain or a continuing change in bowel habit.

Bring useful information

Bring the FIT report, your medicine list and any previous endoscopy reports. Note when symptoms began and any pain, bleeding or bowel changes. Tell your GP about low iron or anaemia. Blood tests and other investigations depend on your symptoms. Speak to your GP before removing gluten if coeliac testing is being considered.

Keep recommended investigations

A negative FIT does not replace a recommended colonoscopy. Colonoscopy can examine the lining, remove many polyps and take biopsies. Confirm the next step and review timeframe at your appointment. Contact the referring team if a referral is overdue.

Get urgent help

Seek urgent assessment for heavy bleeding, black tarry stools, severe pain, persistent vomiting or faintness. Call 111 if you collapse, have heavy bleeding with faintness or cannot travel safely.

Call 111 for an ambulance if you collapse, have heavy bleeding with faintness, or are too unwell to travel safely. Do not wait for a routine appointment or an email reply.





What if symptoms continue after a negative FIT?

Further assessment

Possible further assessments

Colonoscopy

when direct inspection is needed

Imaging

such as CT or ultrasound

Capsule endoscopy

for selected small-bowel
questions

Laboratory tests

blood or stool tests when useful

These are options, not steps in a fixed sequence.
I may request one or more based on your symptoms and results.

Your symptoms, examination, blood results and previous history determine whether colonoscopy or other tests are appropriate.

Read this illustration alongside the advice in this guide.

