

Press release: Be Clear on Cancer campaign urges public to check urine for blood

Public Health England (PHE) is launching a national 'Be Clear on Cancer' campaign which highlights blood in pee as a key symptom of bladder and kidney cancers. The campaign will encourage everyone to 'look before they flush' and visit their GP without delay if they notice blood in their pee, even if it's just once.

A new survey reveals that only 16% of adults aged 50 and over in England (those most at risk of these cancers) say they check the colour of their pee every time they go to the toilet, with women being less likely to check every time (12% versus 20% of men).

A new short film featuring TV doctor Dr Dawn Harper is being released as part of the campaign. The film shows what to look out for as the colour of blood in your pee can vary – from very diluted to bright red or even dark brown, like the colour of weak black tea. Blood in pee is a symptom in almost two thirds (64%) of all bladder cancers and around a fifth (18%) of kidney cancers.

Blood might not appear every time, so it is important that people seek medical help even if they notice it just once. Worryingly, around half (47%) of those surveyed said they would not seek medical advice if they saw blood in their pee just once, with 45% saying they would wait and see if it happened again, potentially putting off a vital diagnosis.

When asked why they would not go to the GP straight away, one in five (20%) say they would be worried about wasting the GP's time and nearly a quarter (23%) would only book an appointment sooner if they had other symptoms.

Latest figures show that every year in England around 19,100 people are diagnosed with bladder or kidney cancer and around 8,000 people die from these diseases. Early diagnosis is critical; 84% of those diagnosed with kidney cancer and 77% of those diagnosed with bladder cancer at the earliest stage (stage 1) will live for at least 5 years. At a late stage (stage 4), this drops to 10% and 9% respectively.

Professor Julia Verne, from Public Health England said:

It is vital that people know that blood in pee could be a sign of cancer.

Our research shows only a small number of people check the colour of their pee every time they go to the toilet. People need to get into the habit of looking before they flush to spot any signs of blood in their pee. And if there is blood, they shouldn't hesitate

about going to their GP. This will help diagnose more people at the early stages, when cancer is more treatable – improving their chances of living longer.

Dr Dawn Harper, TV Doctor and GP, said:

I'm urging people to be vigilant to changes in their body and to check their pee. I hear all too often about people who have delayed seeking medical advice if they have worrying symptoms – like blood in pee – because they are afraid of what the doctor might find or what the treatment might be.

If you do notice blood in your pee, it's probably nothing serious, but it's always worth checking with a health professional – you won't be wasting their time. It's vital that people don't put off getting help; if it is cancer, early diagnosis saves lives.

Professor Chris Harrison, NHS England's national clinical director for cancer, said:

The earlier people are diagnosed, the better their chances, which is why it is vital people understand what to look out for and when to visit the GP. This campaign has the important aim of helping raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of bladder and kidney cancer and encouraging people to visit their GP after seeing blood in their pee.

The 'Be Clear on Cancer' 'Blood in Pee' campaign runs until 23 September and includes advertising on TV, radio and in public toilets and online. For further information about the signs and symptoms of bladder and kidney cancer, search 'Be Clear on Cancer'.

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Background

1. The campaign launches across England on Thursday 19 July 2018 and runs until 23 September 2018. The campaign activity includes TV, print, radio, digital and out of home advertising.
2. Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are run by Public Health England in partnership with the Department of Health and NHS England and with the support of Cancer Research UK
3. Early diagnosis of cancer is a major priority for the government in helping us to improve cancer survival. Be Clear on Cancer campaigns, which aim to raise public awareness of the symptoms of cancer and encourage earlier presentation, are included in the report of the Independent Cancer Taskforce 'Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A Strategy for England 2015 to 2020'.
4. Interview opportunities with Public Health England spokespeople, a range of urologists from across the country, Dr Dawn Harper, charity supporters and case studies are available upon request.
5. [Video assets for the campaign](#) and still images with Dr Dawn Harper can be found on Dropbox.
6. [Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

Factors that increase the risk of bladder and/or kidney cancer include:

- smoking
- being overweight or obese
- some jobs, because of exposure to certain chemicals
- other medical conditions, such as kidney failure
- a family history of cancer

Blood in pee is a key symptom for both bladder cancer and kidney cancer.

Other symptoms of bladder cancer include:

- cystitis (a urinary tract infection) that is difficult to treat or comes

- back quickly after treatment
- pain when peeing

Other symptoms of kidney cancer include:

- a pain that doesn't go away, either in the tummy or in the side, below the ribs
- weight loss

Additional spokespeople quotes

Geraldine Sinfield, bladder cancer survivor and supporter of the Urology Foundation, said:

I noticed blood in my pee in late 2013. I knew something was wrong and made an appointment to see my doctor straight away. He referred me to hospital for tests which showed I had bladder cancer. I'm so glad I acted quickly because my cancer was caught early and just six months after my treatment, my husband and I went sailing around Britain, something I never thought would be possible! Recently, at my last appointment, my doctor was so pleased with my progress that I was told I would no longer need to have annual checkups, which is a huge relief.

Louise de Winter, CEO of The Urology Foundation, said:

We are very pleased to see Public Health England running this campaign. The Urology Foundation will always support campaigns that raise awareness of blood in pee, a symptom of a number of urological cancers.

We know cancer is so much easier to treat when it's caught early, which means checking for blood in pee can be a small, but life-saving decision. Our goal is to lead the fight against urology disease and encouraging people to check for blood in their pee and to take action is an important step in that fight.

Andrew Winterbottom, founder and CEO of Fight Bladder Cancer and a bladder cancer patient himself, explained:

The Blood in Pee campaign is essential to let people know that they should go and see their GP if they have any sign of blood in their pee even if it is just on one occasion. Whatever the reason it's important not to delay as getting it checked out straight away is really important if it turns out to be something serious.

Nick Turkentine, CEO of Kidney Cancer UK, said:

This is an incredibly important campaign as early diagnosis of kidney cancer offers greatly increased chance of a full recovery. One of the early signs something may be wrong is traces, or amounts, of blood in your pee, so if you see it, talk to your GP without fail. Also, look for other possible signs, these may not necessarily be kidney cancer but are worth being aware of including a pain that doesn't go away, either in the tummy or in the side below the ribs, or loss of weight. See your GP if you have any concerns.

Allen Knight, CEO of Action Bladder Cancer UK, said:

Around 8,000 people die from bladder or kidney cancer each year in England. Many of these deaths could be avoided if patients saw a doctor as soon as they noticed a key symptom of these cancers – blood in pee – even if it's only once. Bladder cancer is often diagnosed late, which means it can be even harder to treat. We are pleased to support the Be Clear on Cancer campaign and to help spread the message that if you do notice blood in your pee, you must take action and get checked by your GP – and go back again if it is not resolved.