



## **Be Clear on Cancer - Abdominal symptoms**

### **Campaign overview**

## **CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW**

Be Clear on Cancer has been running since 2010 with the aim of raising awareness of cancer symptoms and encouraging those with symptoms to visit their GP promptly, to help diagnose cancer earlier. When cancer is diagnosed early, treatment is more likely to be successful.

To date, campaigns have focused on specific cancers, including bowel, lung, breast, bladder, kidney, oesophageal and stomach. We are now taking a different strategic approach, by covering a number of symptoms (and cancers) in one campaign.

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Public Health England (PHE) is launching a new regional pilot campaign in the Midlands to raise awareness that certain abdominal symptoms (also known as 'tummy troubles'), that have lasted for three weeks or more could be signs of cancer and to encourage people with these symptoms to see their doctor.

This campaign mainly focuses on symptoms such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort in the tummy area, which can be signs of a number of cancers, such as bowel, ovarian and pancreatic. Around 288,000 people are diagnosed with cancer in England each year.

People who suffer from 'tummy troubles' can sometimes be reluctant to visit their GP for a variety of reasons. These include embarrassment about their symptoms and concern that they might be wasting their GP's time.

The campaign will lead with two main key messages:

- Don't ignore the warning signs. If you've been suffering from tummy troubles such as diarrhoea, bloating, discomfort or anything else that just doesn't feel right, for three weeks or more, it could be a sign of cancer. Tell your doctor
- Finding cancer early makes it more treatable

Secondary messages are:

- If your symptoms persist, your doctor will want to see you
- Don't put your symptoms down to getting older – if you've had tummy troubles such as diarrhoea, feeling bloated or discomfort for three weeks or more, tell your doctor

Run in partnership with the Department of Health and NHS England, and supported by Cancer Research UK, the campaign launches on 9<sup>th</sup> February and runs until 31<sup>st</sup> March in the East and West Midlands. Activity will include radio, press, digital and out of home (including outdoor, washroom and pharmacy bag) advertising, PR and face-to-face events in shopping centres.

The campaign targets men and women aged 50 and over, as older people are most at risk of cancer, and those from lower socio-economic groups in particular as they are often more reluctant to visit their GP. It is also aimed at their friends and family who can pass on information and encourage loved ones to make an appointment with their doctor if they are concerned.