

Rectal bleeding

Date published: 7th May 2021

Rectal bleeding is a key symptom of colorectal cancer, but there are also a number of other benign causes. Tumours often bleed intermittently, so careful history taking is vital if other concerning symptoms are present.

NICE NG12 guidelines

NICE NG12 guidelines recommends referring adults using a suspected cancer pathway referral (for an appointment within 2 weeks) if they are 50 and over with unexplained rectal bleeding; **and** to consider a referral in adults aged under 50 with rectal bleeding and any of the following unexplained symptoms or findings:

- abdominal pain
- change in bowel habit
- weight loss
- iron-deficiency anaemia.