

Rectal Bleeding Assessment & Diagnosis

Seeing blood in your stool or on toilet paper can be distressing. While many causes are benign, rectal bleeding is a symptom that always requires a medical evaluation to rule out serious underlying conditions.

At Canterbury Endoscopy & Gastroenterology, we provide timely, specialist assessment to identify the cause and give you peace of mind.

What causes rectal bleeding?

Rectal bleeding can arise from anywhere in the digestive tract. Common causes we investigate include:

- **Haemorrhoids (Piles):** Dilated blood vessels in the rectum that often cause bright red blood on toilet paper on wiping.
- **Anal Fissures:** Small tears in the lining of the anus, often associated with pain during bowel movements.
- **Colon Polyps:** Pre-cancerous growths that may bleed intermittently as they grow.
- **Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD):** Conditions like Ulcerative Colitis or Crohn's Disease.
- **Diverticular Disease:** Small pouches in the bowel wall that can sometimes bleed significantly.
- **Colorectal Cancer:** Early detection through specialist investigation is the key to successful treatment.

When is rectal bleeding a "Red Flag"?

While all bleeding should be discussed with your healthcare provider, certain red flag bowel symptoms indicate a more urgent need for a colonoscopy:

- Dark rectal bleeding, mixed with stools
- A persistent change in bowel habits (e.g., looser or more frequent stools).
- Unexplained weight loss or constant fatigue (signs of anaemia).
- A family history of bowel cancer or polyps.
- Abdominal pain or a lump in the puku (tummy).

Is a positive FIT test the same as rectal bleeding?

A positive FIT test detects "occult" blood— i.e. microscopic traces you cannot see with the naked eye. Visible rectal bleeding, on the other hand, is an "alarm symptom" that often requires more urgent prioritisation.

Whether your bleeding is visible or was only detected through a screening kit, both results require a specialist colonoscopy to identify the source. At Canterbury Endoscopy & Gastroenterology, we offer prompt private appointments for both symptomatic patients and those with positive FIT tests.

Disclaimer: The information provided on this website is for educational purposes only and is intended to support, not replace, the relationship between a patient and their healthcare professional.

This information should not be used to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Always seek the advice of a healthcare professional regarding any medical condition or symptoms.