

The implementation of the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) across the South West

April 2018 Project Update Bulletin

Which patients are eligible for FIT?

DG30 guidance encourages the use of the test for any patient with abdominal symptoms who do not fit the NG12 2WW criteria.

However, at the moment we are only offering the test to the cohort previously referred to in NG12 and tests for patients that do not meet the above criteria will not be analysed. This is because the transformation funding received was based on NG12.

The NICE Guideline for Suspected Cancer 2015 (NG12) recommended that faecal occult blood tests should be offered to adults without rectal bleeding who were classed as “low risk, but not no risk” of having colorectal cancer.

These are patients who:

- are aged 50 or over with unexplained abdominal pain or weight loss or
- are aged under 60 with changes in their bowel habit or iron-deficiency anaemia or
- are aged 60 or over and have anaemia without iron deficiency.

Following an HTA Assessment, NICE published further guidance in July 2017 – DG30 which confirms that FIT is the faecal occult blood test of choice for this group of patients.

When will GP's start using FIT?

We are in the process of writing to clinical commissioning groups who will inform GP's of the exact start date. It is anticipated this will be in June 2018.

Educational information has been produced for GP's in the form of a video with supporting information and will be send out next month. In addition there are a number of events where FIT will be presented. If you would like us to attend your event or would like a copy of the information then please email Sarah-Jane.Davies@nhs.net

A supply of packs will be sent to each practice at the end of May.

How does the process work?

If a patient is eligible for the test then the patient will be provided with a FIT pack at the consultation by the GP. The patient will complete the test at home (instructions inside the pack give detail on this) and return it to the lab direct in a stamped-addressed envelope. Test results will be returned to the GP.

Because the patient sends off the test themselves, practices are advised to make a note on the patient's record that a test has been issued on the local practice system and ensure a process is in place to follow this up, in addition to giving the patient their usual safety netting advice.

GPs will receive a numerical result for their patients; and a "positive/negative" category in the same way that they currently do for the Guaiac based test.

The way results will be communicated will vary according to local arrangements. Practices will be notified individually by the laboratories when the initial supplies of patient packs are distributed.

Project Update

Key highlights for April from the project plan

- Laboratory plan has been developed and protocols for distributing and transporting tests, and communicating results have been designed. The HM-JACK arc has been procured to analyse results and these have now been installed and training commenced.
- Written guidance has been produced for GP's describing the cohort of patients eligible for the test, how this cohort differs from the screening programme, pathway options for positive and at/above threshold and positive but below threshold, and negative but symptoms persist, confidence levels in the test, and safety netting.
- An educational video is in production and will be sent out to CCG's for distribution to GP's, in Mid May.
- Project metrics have been developed. These are in the process of being communicated and systems for data collection established.
- Patient information has been agreed (also available in other languages) will be incorporated into the packs has been agreed
- Timetable for the delivery of the primary care & stakeholder engagement programme has been produced.
- Cornwall Audit of referrals across 15 practices underway (concludes June).
- Mechanisms for patients, carers and GP's to feedback their experience of issuing and using the test have been agreed. This will be via a mix of online, questionnaires and experience forums. The details of the website will be provided inside the test pack and in supporting documentation provided to GP's.
- Patient experience questionnaire produced.

Key Tasks for May

- Write to all CCG's to inform them of the process for go live and provide them with information to send to GP's.
- CCG's to write to all GP's and provide educational information provided by the project team and how to access further support.
- Undertake educational / informative events across the South West

- Laboratory verification of assay performance, appropriate training and documentation completed.
- Laboratories to set up interface between analyser and host computer system for transmission of results.
- Laboratories to test: Data extract procedure on both sites and reporting mechanisms; and, reporting of results to GP practices across alliance area from both Exeter and Bristol.
- Calculate number of packs required for initial distribution and laboratories to place order for packs for delivery to Bristol and Exeter for distribution. Confirm distribution mechanisms with local laboratories and ensure packs are in place with GPs for go-live date.
- Identify mechanism to replenish packs in GP practices and monitor requirements.
- Identify 3 of largest surgeries in Peninsula and SWAG areas to undertake more focused audit and design methodology for securing feedback about implementation including staff views and patient experience .

Where can I access further information and support?

- Contact the programme team for information about the project: sarah-jane.davies@nhs.net
- Contact the laboratory for any queries about the test kit: www.exeterlaboratory.com and www.nbt.nhs.uk/severn-pathology
- Your local Cancer Research Facilitator will be in touch shortly to discuss any support that you may need. If you would like to arrange a visit or call to discuss FIT please contact: Rachel.byford@cancer.org.uk
- For more information about FIT the following website might be of interest: www.faecal-immunochemical-test.co.uk/