

## Bowel Cancer Awareness Month – fast facts

**June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. This year concentrates on the importance of early detection, as bowel cancer is one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early.**



- ▶ Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world and it is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia.
- ▶ Bowel cancer risk rises sharply and progressively after the age of 50.
- ▶ Both men and women are at risk of developing bowel cancer, with a split of 55% male and 45% female.
- ▶ The five year survival rate is 68% which lags well behind other common cancers such as breast, melanoma and prostate, which have survival rates of around 90%.
- ▶ In its early stages bowel cancer often has no obvious symptoms. Some people, however, may experience the following symptoms:
  - A recent, persistent change in bowel habit to looser, more diarrhoea-like motions, going to the toilet more often, or trying to go (i.e. irregularity in someone whose bowels have previously been regular)
  - Blood (either bright red or very dark) in the stool
  - Diarrhoea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
  - Frequent gas pains, bloating, fullness or cramps
  - Stools that are narrower than usual
  - A lump or mass in your stomach
  - Weight loss for no known reason
  - Persistent, severe abdominal pain, which has come on recently for the first time
  - Feeling very tired
  - Vomiting
- ▶ If you have any of these symptoms, it does not mean that you have bowel cancer, but it is very important to discuss them with your doctor.
- ▶ Medical guidelines recommend screening for bowel cancer every one to two years using a bowel cancer screening test (known as a Faecal Immunochemical Test or FIT) from age 50.
- ▶ The Australian Government runs a national screening program where they will send people a free screening kit in the year you turn 50, 54, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72 and 74 only. If you receive a free kit from the Australian Government it is recommended you complete it.

**+50  
years**



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# Strategies for building resilience

**Being resilient does not mean being resistant to stress, but it does mean adapting to and coping with stressful situations. It is not an inherent quality, but it can be acquired through learned behaviours, thoughts and actions.**

Some ways of building resilience to stress include:

**Maintaining and forming relationships:** relationships are often among the first things to suffer when someone is under stress, but good relationships are critical for mental and physical health. Relationships are also a good source of support and a sympathetic ear, while offering help and support to others can make you feel good about yourself.

**Exercise:** physical exertion helps counteract the effects of stress and can also lead to better sleep.

**Relaxation:** easier said than done when you are stressed, but setting aside some time to unwind can be a good way of easing pressure. Whether it is yoga or meditation, or even a walk in the park, time out of a busy schedule can help you find a new perspective.

**Having fun:** laughter can reduce stress and help us feel more positive. Even if you don't feel up to it, making an effort to do fun activities, particularly with friends, can mitigate the effects of stress.

**Positive attitude:** changing the way you look at a situation can take away some of its power to frighten you, so try to focus on the positive things in your life, rather than just the negative ones.

**Taking control:** people who are stressed often feel at the mercy of events beyond their control, but even initiating small actions can give you a sense of empowerment, which can give you the confidence to take bigger steps.

**Acceptance:** some things you may not be able to change, at least in the short term, so instead of worrying about things that are beyond your control, focus on those things you can alter.

**Keep working at it:** resilience takes time to build, so it is important not to be discouraged if you don't see the effects immediately. Instead, persevere with the strategies you find work best, and be assured that resilience is something that can be learned.



## Salmon Poke Bowl

**Poke (pronounced poh-keh) bowls are a Hawaiian delicacy, and are taking off here in Australia.**

Poke bowls usually consist of a grain and raw fish such as tuna or salmon, and contain a high amount of protein and good fats, especially Omega 3. Omega 3 can help fight depression and anxiety, as well as improve eye health.

**Serves 4**

### Ingredients:

- ▶ 4 cups of steamed brown rice
- ▶ 500g salmon (skin and bones removed, cut into 1cm cubes)
- ▶ 1 lime (juice and zest)
- ▶ 3 tablespoons of tamari or gluten-free soy
- ▶ 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- ▶ 1 teaspoon mirin (sweet rice wine)
- ▶ 3 green onions finely sliced
- ▶ 2 avocados, skin and seed removed, roughly chopped
- ▶ 2 teaspoons sesame seeds
- ▶ 1/3 bunch kale, well washed and roughly torn
- ▶ 4 tablespoons fried shallots
- ▶ 1 cup shredded nori (seaweed)

### Method:

1. In a chilled mixing bowl, gently toss salmon with tamari, lime-juice, zest, vinegar and mirin.
2. Add the green onions, avocado and sesame seeds, again mix lightly before folding through the kale.
3. Place a portion of 1 cup of cooked brown rice into a serving bowl, top with 1/4 of the salmon and avocado salad.
4. Top and garnish with fried shallots and shredded nori.



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