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Doctor Shares Early Bowel Cancer Symptom Many People Ignore as ‘Married at First Sight’ Star Mel Schilling Dies at 53

By bestfolkmedicine · 14/04/2026 · 4 min read



A Wake-Up Call Following the Case of Mel Schilling

Bowel cancer—also known as colorectal cancer—is often called a “silent disease.”

Not because it has no symptoms, but because many of its **earliest warning signs are subtle, easily dismissed, or mistaken for something harmless**.

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Recently, public attention has grown following the diagnosis of Mel Schilling, known from *Married at First Sight*. Her experience has sparked important conversations about early detection—and the symptoms many people overlook until it's too late.

One warning sign, in particular, keeps coming up in medical discussions:

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Changes in bowel habits.

Let's explore what this really means, why it matters, and how to protect yourself using both medical awareness and a holistic lifestyle approach.

The Overlooked Symptom: Changes in Bowel Habits

Many doctors emphasize that one of the **earliest signs of bowel cancer** is a persistent change in how your digestive system functions.

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This can include:

- Ongoing constipation or diarrhea
- Alternating between the two
- Narrow or "pencil-thin" stools
- Feeling like your bowel doesn't fully empty
- Increased urgency or frequency

The problem?

Most people blame these symptoms on:

- Stress
- Diet changes
- Aging
- Irritable bowel issues

And they delay seeking medical advice.

Why This Symptom Is Often Ignored

From a behavioral perspective, there are several reasons:

1. It Feels “Normal Enough”

Digestive changes happen to everyone occasionally. That makes it easy to dismiss.

2. It’s Not Painful at First

Early bowel cancer often develops **without significant pain**, which reduces urgency.

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3. Social Discomfort

People are less likely to talk about bowel habits openly—even with doctors.

4. Misattribution

Symptoms are often attributed to:

- Hemorrhoids
- Food sensitivities
- Temporary gut imbalance

Other Early Warning Signs You Shouldn’t Ignore

While bowel habit changes are key, they often appear alongside other subtle symptoms:

- Blood in stool (bright red or dark)
- Persistent bloating or abdominal discomfort
- Unexplained fatigue
- Sudden weight loss
- Iron deficiency anemia

These signs may seem mild individually—but together, they can signal something more serious.

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What Is Bowel Cancer?

Bowel Cancer develops in the large intestine (colon) or rectum.

It usually starts as:

- Small growths called polyps
- Which can slowly become cancerous over time

This slow progression is actually **an advantage**—because early detection can save lives.

The Power of Early Detection

Medical evidence is clear:

- When detected early, bowel cancer has a **very high survival rate**
- Screening can identify precancerous polyps before they turn dangerous

According to global cancer research:

- Early-stage detection can lead to survival rates above **90%**

The danger is not the disease itself—but **late detection**.

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A Holistic View: Why Gut Health Matters

From a holistic health perspective, bowel health reflects overall systemic balance.

Your gut is deeply connected to:

- Immune function
- Inflammation levels
- Hormonal balance
- Mental health (gut-brain axis)

Chronic gut imbalance may contribute to:

- Inflammation
- Microbiome disruption
- Increased disease risk over time

Lifestyle Factors That Increase Risk

Understanding risk factors helps you take control early.

Diet Low in Fiber

A diet lacking:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole foods

Can slow digestion and affect gut health.

Processed Foods & Red Meat

High intake of:

- Processed meats
- Refined sugars

Has been linked to increased bowel cancer risk.

Sedentary Lifestyle

Lack of movement slows:

- Digestion
- Metabolic processes

Alcohol & Smoking

Both increase:

- Inflammation
- Cellular damage

Chronic Stress

Stress disrupts:

- Gut microbiome
- Digestive function

Natural Ways to Support Bowel Health

While lifestyle changes don’t replace medical screening, they **support long-term protection**.

1. Increase Fiber Intake

Fiber helps:

- Cleanse the colon
- Promote regular bowel movements
- Support healthy bacteria

Sources:

- Leafy greens
- Seeds
- Legumes

2. Support the Microbiome

Healthy gut bacteria are essential.

Include:

- Fermented foods (sauerkraut, kefir)
- Prebiotic foods (onions, garlic)

3. Hydration

Water supports:

- Digestion
- Detoxification
- Stool consistency

4. Daily Movement

Even light activity:

- Stimulates bowel function
- Improves circulation

5. Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Focus on:

- Turmeric
- Berries
- Olive oil

When Should You See a Doctor?

This is critical.

Seek medical advice if symptoms last more than **2–3 weeks**, especially:

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- Persistent bowel changes
- Blood in stool
- Ongoing fatigue

Do not rely solely on natural remedies when warning signs are present.

Screening Saves Lives

Screening methods include:

- Stool tests
- Colonoscopy

Many countries recommend screening starting around age 45–50, or earlier if risk factors are present.

The Bigger Message: Don’t Normalize Warning Signs

The story of Mel Schilling highlights something important:

> Symptoms we ignore today can become serious tomorrow.

Your body often whispers before it screams.

Final Thoughts

Bowel cancer is not always loud or obvious.

Its earliest sign—**a change in bowel habits**—is something many people experience, but few take seriously.

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That’s where awareness makes all the difference.

Remember:

- Early detection can save your life
- Subtle symptoms matter
- Your gut health is a key indicator of overall health

And most importantly:

If something feels different for your body—don’t ignore it.

Sources

- NHS – Bowel cancer symptoms and guidance
- Cancer Research UK – Early signs and survival rates
- Mayo Clinic – Colorectal cancer overview and symptoms
- American Cancer Society – Risk factors and prevention
- World Health Organization – Cancer statistics and prevention

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Read online: https://bestfolkmedicine.com/2026/04/early-bowel-cancer-symptoms-people-ignore/

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