

Faecal calprotectin diagnostic tests for inflammatory diseases of the bowel

Information for the public

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Faecal calprotectin testing is recommended by NICE as an option to help doctors distinguish between inflammatory bowel diseases, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and non-inflammatory bowel diseases, such as irritable bowel syndrome.

Faecal calprotectin is a substance that is released into the intestines in excess when there is any inflammation there. Its presence can mean a person has an inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. These conditions can cause very similar symptoms to irritable bowel syndrome. But, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis can also cause symptoms serious enough for major surgery to be needed, so it's important to distinguish between them and irritable bowel syndrome.

Many people with irritable bowel syndrome have unnecessary invasive hospital investigations before their condition is diagnosed. Using faecal calprotectin testing will mean most people with irritable bowel syndrome will be diagnosed without the need for these investigations.

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