

National

## Increased bowel cancer risk for type-2 diabetics identified in study

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**AN AUSTRALIAN study has identified a link between type 2 diabetes in men and a significantly increased risk of bowel cancer, triggering calls for diabetics to have regular checks.**

Researchers tracked almost 1300 people with type 2 diabetes, recruited in the 1990s as part of the Fremantle Diabetes Study, for up to 17 years, then compared results with Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics.

They found men aged 55 to 84 with type 2 diabetes were 87 per cent more likely than the general population to develop bowel cancer.

Study author Tim Davis, a Professor of Medicine at the University of Western Australia, presented the findings at the Australian Diabetes Society annual scientific meeting in Perth yesterday.

He said more research was needed to explain the link.

"It might be that the risk factors for the two conditions, including obesity, are the same and that they develop independently of each other or it may be that factors associated with diabetes trigger bowel cancer," Professor Davis said.

Prof Davis said that based on the study findings, faecal occult blood testing every one or two years should be considered for men aged over 55 attending diabetes clinics.

Bowel Cancer Australia chief executive Julien Wiggins said the study added to existing evidence linking the two common diseases.

Peter Murphy, 63, of Margate, north of Brisbane, was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2001 and bowel cancer eight years later.

He said if he had known about the link between the two conditions, he would have had regular colonoscopies after being diagnosed with diabetes.

The 63-year-old had surgery and chemotherapy as a result of the cancer.