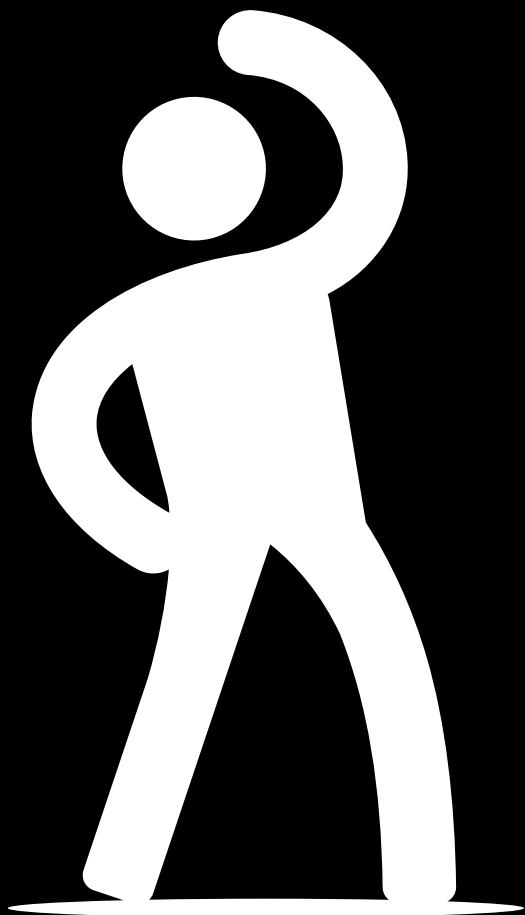


# Diet, physical activity and your risk of prostate cancer






**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**

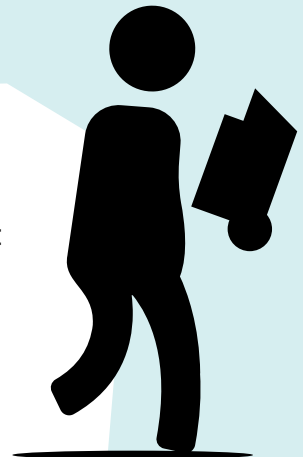
# About this leaflet

This leaflet explains how a healthy lifestyle might lower your risk of prostate cancer. A healthy diet and regular exercise are important for staying a healthy weight, and this may help lower your risk of getting aggressive prostate cancer.

Use this leaflet as a general guide and ask your GP or nurse for more information. You can also call our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.

The following symbols appear throughout the leaflet to guide you to sources of further information:

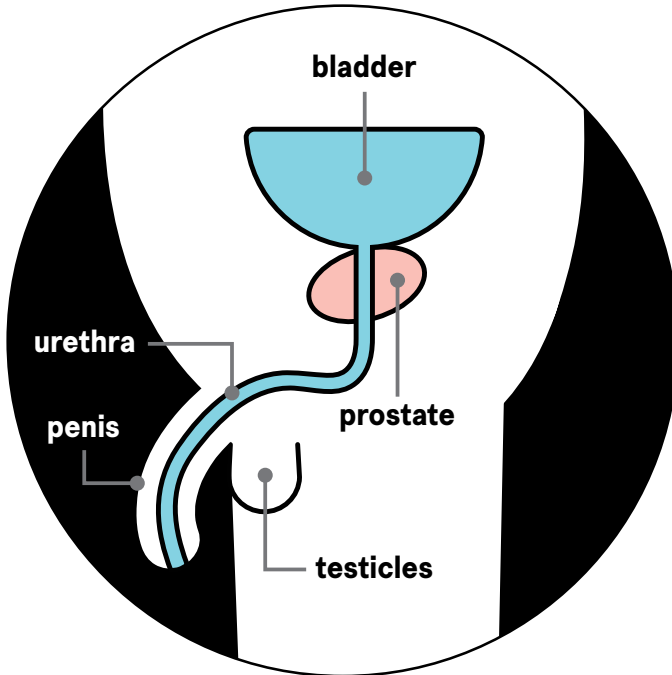
-  Our Specialist Nurses
-  Our Risk Information Service
-  Our publications



# Contents

<b>About this leaflet</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>What is prostate cancer?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
What is my risk of prostate cancer? .....	5
Does prostate cancer have any symptoms? .....	6
Can I reduce my risk of prostate cancer? .....	6
<b>Keeping a healthy weight</b> .....	<b>7</b>
What is a healthy weight? .....	7
<b>What is a healthy diet?</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Can any foods lower my risk? .....	12
Can any foods increase my risk? .....	13
<b>Can physical activity reduce my risk?</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Smoking and prostate cancer</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Where can I find out more?</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>More information from us</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Other useful organisations</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>About us</b> .....	<b>23</b>

# What is prostate cancer?



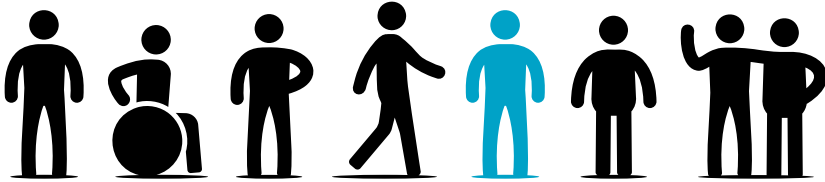
Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way. Sometimes, prostate cancer grows too slowly to cause any problems or affect how long you live. But sometimes it grows quickly. This is called aggressive prostate cancer.

Aggressive prostate cancer is more likely to cause problems and need treatment to stop it spreading. Prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body is called advanced prostate cancer.

The earlier you find prostate cancer, the easier it is to treat. And the first step is to check your risk.

## What is my risk of prostate cancer?

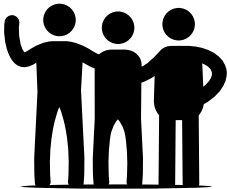
In the UK, about **1 in 8** men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.



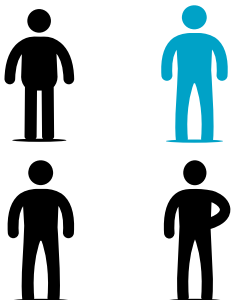
You may be more likely to get prostate cancer if:



**You are aged 50 or over** – and your risk increases as you get older.



**You have family history of prostate cancer** – you are two and a half times more likely to get it if your father or brother has had it.



**You are a Black man** – Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other men, and at a younger age. Your risk may increase once you're over 45.



1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

## Does prostate cancer have any symptoms?

Most men with early prostate cancer (cancer that's contained inside the prostate) don't have any symptoms. This is why it's important to know your risk (page 5).

Some men have urinary problems, such as difficulty starting to urinate (wee) or a weak flow. These symptoms may be mild and develop slowly over many years. If you notice these symptoms, they're more likely to be caused by something else. But it's a good idea to get it checked.

If you're worried about your risk or have any symptoms, talk to your GP.

 You can also speak to one of our **Specialist Nurses**, in confidence, on **0800 074 8383**, or chat to them online. For more information, read our  booklet, **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems.**

## Can I reduce my risk of prostate cancer?

Cancer has many causes and no one knows how to prevent it. But making a few simple lifestyle changes can reduce your risk – including your risk of prostate cancer.

There are some things you can't change to reduce your risk, like your age, ethnicity and family history – but you can make lifestyle changes.

In this leaflet, we discuss how you can help reduce your risk of prostate cancer by:

- keeping a healthy weight (page 7)
- eating a balanced diet (page 8)
- being active (page 18).

If you want help with making lifestyle changes, speak to your GP. They can talk to you about healthy living services. Or visit **[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)**

# Keeping a healthy weight

Keeping a healthy weight can reduce your risk of aggressive or advanced prostate cancer. This is because extra body fat can affect how your body works, which might help cancer cells grow. Being overweight may also make prostate cancer harder to find using standard tests, including the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. This makes it more likely to be found at a later stage (advanced prostate cancer).

Keeping a healthy weight can also reduce your risk of other types of cancer. And it can help prevent other health problems, such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure.

## What is a healthy weight?

You can check if you're a healthy weight by finding out your body mass index (BMI) and waist to height ratio. Both are important because your BMI does not give all the information about extra fat you may be carrying. You can work out both easily at home using a tape measure and weighing scales (see next page).

## Your BMI

Your BMI can tell you whether your weight is healthy. It is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in metres squared. A higher BMI usually means you're overweight. The BMI is not suitable if you're very muscular. This is because your BMI only tells you if you're carrying too much weight – it can't tell the difference between fat and muscle.

A healthy BMI is:

- 18.5 to 24.9 if you're white
- 18.5 to 22.9 if you have a Black African, Black African-Caribbean, Asian, Middle Eastern or mixed ethnic background.

Find a BMI calculator at [www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)

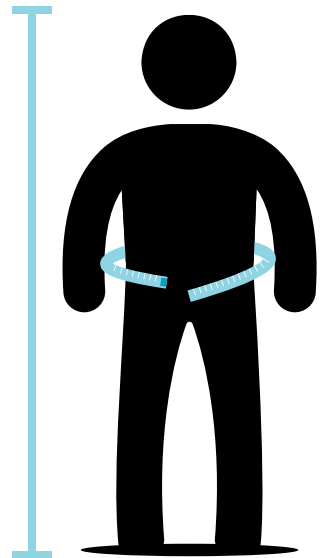
## Your waist to height ratio

A larger waist size may mean you have too much fat around or inside your organs. So even if your BMI is in the healthy range, you might still be carrying too much weight. If your BMI is below 35, you may want to calculate your waist to height ratio too:

- wrap a soft tape measure around your stomach – halfway between the top of your hips and the bottom of your ribs
- breathe out naturally (don't hold your stomach in)
- take the measurement and divide it by your height
- make sure you use the same unit to measure your height and waist (for example, centimetres or inches).

For example, a waist size of 90cm divided by a height of 170cm would equal a waist to height ratio of 0.53. A waist to height ratio of 0.5 or higher means you may be at higher risk of health problems.

You can also calculate your waist to height ratio at [www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools](http://www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools)



## What is a healthy diet?

A healthy, balanced diet includes all the food groups shown in the Eatwell Guide on page 10. This helps your body get all the energy and nutrients (natural chemicals found in foods) it needs, while only eating small amounts of foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

## Tips for healthy eating

- **Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.** A portion is about a handful (80g) – fresh, frozen or tinned. To get a variety of nutrients, eat fruit and vegetables from all colour groups – red, purple, yellow, orange, green and white.
- **Base meals on starchy foods** – like wholegrain bread, rice and pasta, or potatoes, plantain and sweet potato.
- **Eat some dairy or dairy alternatives.** Choose lower fat and lower sugar options. Make sure dairy alternatives have added calcium or are calcium-fortified.
- **Eat some protein** – such as beans, pulses, fish, eggs and lean meat, or meat alternatives (e.g. tofu or Quorn™).
- **Limit red meat and processed meat (page 14).** Try eating white meat instead, such as chicken or fish.
- **Eat two portions of fish a week** – one of which should be oily, such as a fillet of white fish plus a tin of mackerel (a portion is around 140g).
- **Choose unsaturated oils and spreads** – such as vegetable oils – and use in small amounts.
- **Drink six to eight glasses (250ml each) of fluid a day.** Water is best, but lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks, tea and coffee all count too.
- **Limit foods high in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar** – such as butter, sauces, cakes and crisps. They are often high in calories but low in nutrients, and may lead to weight gain. Most packaged foods tell you how much they contain with red, orange and green labels. Try to eat more foods with orange and green labels.
- **Limit sugary drinks**, including fruit juice and smoothies, to 150ml a day.

## Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	<b>3.0g</b>	<b>1.3g</b>	<b>34g</b>	<b>0.9g</b>
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

**Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars**

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance shows how much of what you eat overall should

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day



**Eat less often and in small amounts**

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein  
 Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of fish per week, one of which is oily fish, and red and processed meat



# Guide

of healthier and more sustainable food. It  
come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates



Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Dairy and alternatives

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options



Other proteins  
of sustainably  
ity. Eat less

Per day  2000kcal  2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what you eat and drink should come from each food group.

The Eatwell Guide is suitable for most people. If you have specific dietary requirements or health problems, speak to your doctor or a dietitian.

For more information on healthy eating, including examples of portion sizes and recipes, visit:

- British Dietetic Association ([www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com))
- NHS website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) – search for the Eatwell Guide)
- World Cancer Research Fund ([www.wcrf.org](http://www.wcrf.org)).

To help you keep a healthy weight, try to do some physical activity alongside a healthy diet (see page 18).

## Can any foods lower my risk?

No single food has been proven to lower your risk of prostate cancer. It is best to eat a balanced diet that includes all the food groups shown on pages 10–11.

You may have heard that certain foods or dietary supplements might lower your risk of prostate cancer, including:

- lycopene (in tomatoes and tomato products)
- oily fish
- selenium (in fish, seafood, liver and kidney)
- soya foods (e.g. tofu, soya milk)
- vitamin E (in nuts, seeds, wholegrains, green leafy vegetables and avocados)
- zinc.

With all these foods, some studies have found they might reduce your risk of prostate cancer, but others have not. This means we can't say for sure if any of these foods can reduce your risk. But even if there's not enough evidence that these foods lower your risk of prostate cancer, they are good to include as part of a balanced diet.

## Can any foods increase my risk?

There's no strong evidence that any one food can increase your risk of prostate cancer. Researchers are looking at a possible link with dairy foods, calcium, red meat and processed meat – but some studies have found an effect on prostate cancer, while others have found no effect at all.

We need more research to fully understand their effect on prostate cancer, so there is no need to cut any foods out of your diet completely. You can still eat most of these foods in moderate amounts as part of a healthy, balanced diet (see page 10).

### Dairy foods

Some studies have found a link between dairy foods – like milk, yoghurt and cheese – and prostate cancer, but others have not. Where a link has been found, it isn't clear what causes it – it could be to do with calcium (see below) or something else.

For now, there's no recommendation for men to eat less dairy. Dairy foods help you get enough calcium (see below). There's also strong evidence that they may reduce your risk of bowel cancer. But try not to have too much (see page 11).

### Calcium

Some studies suggest that calcium – from both dairy and non-dairy foods – may increase your risk of prostate cancer. Others have only found a link with calcium found in dairy foods. We need more research

to understand this, but it's still important to make sure you're getting enough calcium. Your body needs about 700mg a day to keep your bones healthy (see below). Try not to have more than this.

You should get enough calcium from a balanced diet that includes dairy or non-dairy alternatives, like fortified soya milk or almond milk. You can also get calcium from other foods, such as fruit and vegetables, but it isn't absorbed as easily. You shouldn't need to take calcium supplements. In a typical day, you would get enough calcium by eating:

- one 120g low-fat yoghurt (dairy or non-dairy) – 180mg
- two slices of wholemeal bread – 106mg
- half a tin of sardines in brine (60g) – 240mg
- two whole pieces of boiled broccoli (85g) – 36mg
- one medium orange – 29mg.

It is also important to get enough vitamin D, as it helps your body absorb calcium. Our bodies make vitamin D when our skin is exposed to sunlight. Between October and March, everyone living in the UK should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) of vitamin D – as there are low levels of sunlight during these months.

## Red and processed meat

There is strong evidence that eating red and processed meat increases your risk of bowel cancer. There is some evidence that it may increase your risk of prostate cancer, but we need more studies to be sure. Red meat includes beef, pork, lamb, mutton, goat and venison.

Processed meat is meat that has been preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or with preservatives. It includes ham, bacon and some sausages (for example hot dogs, salami and pepperoni).

Try to avoid eating processed meat as much as possible, but red meat can be part of a healthy diet. Red meat is a good source of nutrients (such as protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B12). But try not to have more than three portions a week. This is around 350 to 500g cooked (700 to 750g raw). Here are some typical portion sizes:

- grilled 8oz beef steak – 163g
- Sunday roast with three thin slices of beef – 90g
- one pork chop – 120g.

If you're having red meat in a stew or curry, buy a smaller pack of meat and add more vegetables, beans or pulses instead. Try to have regular meat-free days when you base your meals around other protein sources such as fish, eggs, pulses, beans and soya products, such as tofu. For example, if you have a meat-heavy meal like steak (163g), eat less or no meat the next day.



## Cooking methods

There is some evidence that cooking starchy foods (such as potatoes and bread), meat or fish at high temperatures (so that it becomes burned or charred) may increase your risk of some types of cancer. But more research is needed. And it's not clear if this includes prostate cancer.

Try aiming for a golden yellow colour rather than brown when baking, toasting or roasting starchy foods. You don't need to avoid having a barbecue, but you can make it healthier by taking these steps.

- Try not to let flames touch meat. Fat dripping from meat can cause flames to rise, so try using leaner meat or cutting off extra fat. Reducing the cooking time can also help – for example, cook the meat in the oven and finish it off on the barbecue.
- Marinate the meat before putting it on the barbecue, such as in lemon juice, yoghurt, olive oil, vinegar and herbs. This can reduce the amount of harmful chemicals that develop, but make sure that the marinade doesn't drip and cause flames.
- Turn the meat frequently to help prevent burning.
- If the meat has burned, cut off the black bits before you eat it. This can get rid of some harmful chemicals.

## Alcohol

There is strong evidence that drinking alcohol increases your risk of several types of cancer, including throat and liver cancer. We need more research to know if this includes prostate cancer.

To support your overall health, limit the amount you drink to 14 units a week. That's roughly six pints of medium-strength beer (4% ABV), or four glasses (175ml) of medium-strength (13 per cent) wine. Try to spread these out during the week, and have some alcohol-free days to give your body a break. For more information about alcohol units and how to cut back, visit [www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)

## Can I take supplements to lower my risk?

There is no evidence that taking supplements can lower your risk of prostate cancer. In fact, some may be harmful. The best way to get the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients your body needs is by eating a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Speak to your doctor before taking any supplements, and don't take more than the recommended daily allowance.



# Can physical activity reduce my risk?

Physical activity is good for your general health and wellbeing, and can help you keep a healthy weight and level of fitness. Physical activity may also lower your risk of aggressive or advanced prostate cancer. And it can lower your risk of other health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and type-2 diabetes.

Before starting a new exercise, speak to your doctor – especially if you have health problems like heart or lung disease, or joint problems.

## How much physical activity should I do?

- Any type of physical activity is good for you. Try to do something that gets your heart rate up every day. Even gentle exercise (like housework or gardening) or just moving more (like standing up after an hour of sitting) can improve your fitness.
- If you can, aim for two and a half hours (150 minutes) of moderate exercise every week – such as brisk walking or cycling for 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- If you are new to exercise or have had a break, start with gentle exercise for 10 to 15 minutes a day, and slowly build up.
- If you're already active, consider increasing the intensity, such as running or fast swimming for 30 minutes a day, three days a week. Aim for at least 75 minutes a week of vigorous exercise.
- Try to do activities that strengthen all the muscle groups, like lifting weights, using resistance bands or machines, carrying heavy shopping or doing heavy gardening.

## Tips to help you get active

- Find a sport or activity you enjoy, or do lots of different ones so you don't get bored. Try anything that gets you moving.
- You might find it more fun to exercise with other people. Ask a friend to do an activity with you, or join a sports team, running group or walking group.
- If you often drive or take the bus for short journeys, try walking instead.
- Spend less time sitting down. When possible, break it up with an activity. You could try stretching or walking around the living room while watching TV.
- If you can't stand up or walk easily, you can exercise from your chair or bed. This could be as gentle as moving your arms and legs while sitting down, or trying exercises like chair yoga.
- You might find it helpful to write down everything you do in an activity diary so you can see how well you're doing.
- Ask your GP about exercise and wellbeing services near you.



## Smoking and prostate cancer


There is some evidence that smoking increases your risk of prostate cancer, including aggressive prostate cancer. There is strong evidence that it increases the risk of other cancers and serious health problems, such as heart disease and stroke. But if you stop smoking, your risk begins to fall. After 10 years, your risk may be as low as in a man who has never smoked.

You're more likely to quit for good if you use a stop smoking service. Your GP can support you with this, or visit


[www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking)

## Where can I find out more?

To find out more about your risk and having tests, read our booklet,

 **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems**, or visit [prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org). We also have a range of other leaflets and booklets about prostate problems.

Questions about your risk of prostate cancer or the PSA blood test?

 Contact our **Risk Information Service** on **0800 448 0821** or visit [prostatecanceruk.org/risk-info](http://prostatecanceruk.org/risk-info)

# More information from us

## The Tool Kit

The Tool Kit information pack contains fact sheets that explain how prostate cancer is diagnosed, how it's treated and how it may affect your lifestyle. Each treatment fact sheet also includes a list of suggested questions to ask your doctor. Call our Specialist Nurses for a personally tailored copy.

## Leaflets and booklets

We have a range of other leaflets and booklets about prostate cancer and other prostate problems.

## To order publications:

All our publications are free and available to order or download online. To order them:

- call us on **0800 074 8383**
- visit our website at [prostatecanceruk.org/publications](http://prostatecanceruk.org/publications)

## Chat to one of our Specialist Nurses

If you want to talk about prostate cancer or other prostate problems, call our Specialist Nurses in confidence. You can also text **NURSE** to **70004**, or you can email or chat online with our nurses on our website. Visit [prostatecanceruk.org/get-support](http://prostatecanceruk.org/get-support)



**Chat to one of our  
Specialist Nurses**

**0800 074 8383\***

**[prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)**

\* Calls are recorded for training purposes only. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

## Other useful organisations

### British Dietetic Association

[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

**Telephone: 0121 200 8080**

Information about a healthy diet and how to find a registered dietitian.

### British Heart Foundation

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

**Telephone: 0808 802 1234**

Information about heart disease and eating for a healthy heart.

### British Nutrition Foundation

[www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)

**Telephone: 020 7557 7930**

Information on a healthy diet and how diet may be linked to cancer.

### NHS website

[www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell)

Information about conditions, treatments and lifestyle, including advice on quitting smoking.

### World Cancer Research Fund

[www.wcrf-uk.org](http://www.wcrf-uk.org)

**Telephone: 0300 102 2523**

Funds research and provides information on diet and exercise to reduce the risk of cancer.

# About us

We're Prostate Cancer UK. We're striving for a world where no one dies from prostate cancer.

We work to give everyone the power to navigate prostate cancer, by providing up-to-date, unbiased and accurate information about prostate diseases. But we're not here to replace your doctor. Always get advice from a healthcare professional to help you make decisions that are right for you.

References used in this leaflet are available at [prostatecanceruk.org](https://prostatecanceruk.org)

This publication was written and edited by our Health Information team.

It was reviewed by:

- Francis Chinegwundoh MBE, Consultant Urological Surgeon, Barts Health NHS Trust
- Nicola Porter, Dietician, Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Jo Sansom, Specialist Community Dietitian, Macmillan Cancer Support
- Karen Wilkinson, Clinical Nurse Specialist, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Our Specialist Nurses
- Our volunteers.

## Tell us what you think

If you have any comments about our publications, you can email: [yourfeedback@prostatecanceruk.org](mailto:yourfeedback@prostatecanceruk.org)

# Donate today – help others like you

Every year over 64,000 men get the life-changing news that they have prostate cancer. But thanks to our generous supporters, we're there to help men when they need us most. You can help more men get free, unbiased, confidential support by donating to us today:

- £10 could fund a call with one of our Specialist Nurses.
- £20 could give 40 men vital information through our handy

 **Know your prostate: a quick guide.**

To donate, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/donate](https://prostatecanceruk.org/donate) or call **0800 082 1616** or text **PROSTATE** to **70004**†. And for other ways to support us, head to [prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved](https://prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved)

† You can donate up to £10 via SMS and we will receive 100% of your donation. Texts are charged at your standard rate. For full terms and conditions and more information, please visit [prostatecanceruk.org/terms](https://prostatecanceruk.org/terms)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**



**Chat to one of our  
Specialist Nurses  
0800 074 8383\*  
[prostatecanceruk.org](https://prostatecanceruk.org)**

**Trusted  
Information  
Creator**



*Patient Information Forum*

 **@Prostate Cancer UK**  **@ProstateUK**  **@ProstateCancerUK**

© Prostate Cancer UK February 2026 | To be reviewed February 2029

**Call our Specialist Nurses from Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, Wednesday 10am – 5pm**

\* Calls are recorded for training purposes only.

Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

Prostate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Registered company number 02653887.

8065

DRK/MAR26

