

Know your prostate

A quick guide

What is the prostate?

The prostate is a gland. It is usually the size and shape of a walnut and grows bigger as you get older. It sits under the bladder and surrounds the urethra, which is the tube that carries urine (wee) out of the body. The prostate's main job is to help make semen – the fluid that carries sperm.

Who has a prostate?

The following people have a prostate:

- men
- trans women*
- non-binary people who were registered male at birth**
- some intersex people.***

Trans, non-binary or intersex?

This information has been developed based on guidance and evidence in men. Some of this information is still relevant to you – but your experience may be slightly different. For more information visit prostatecanceruk.org/trans-women

What can go wrong?

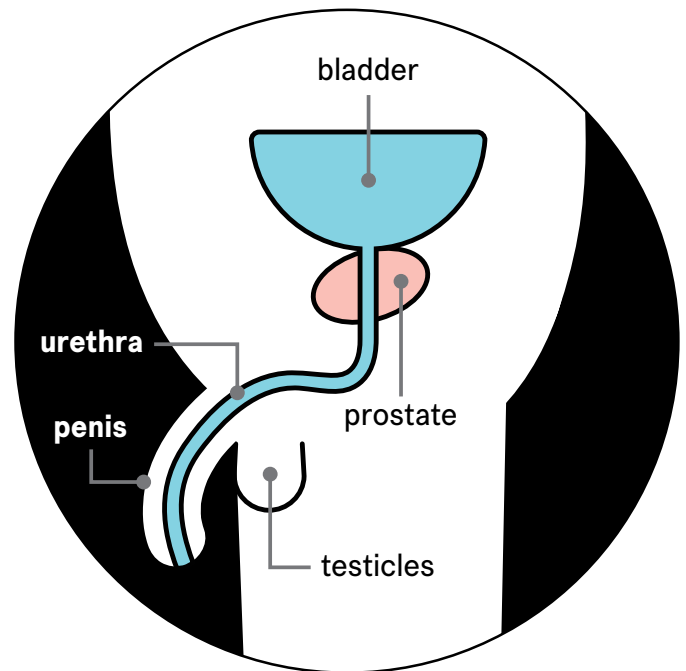
The most common prostate problems are:

- an enlarged prostate
- prostatitis
- prostate cancer.

* A trans woman is someone who was registered male at birth and identifies as a woman. Trans women can develop prostate problems, even if they have taken hormones or if they have had genital reconstructive surgery. The prostate is not removed during this surgery.

** A non-binary person does not identify as a man or a woman.

*** An intersex person may have both male and female sexual characteristics and so might have a prostate.



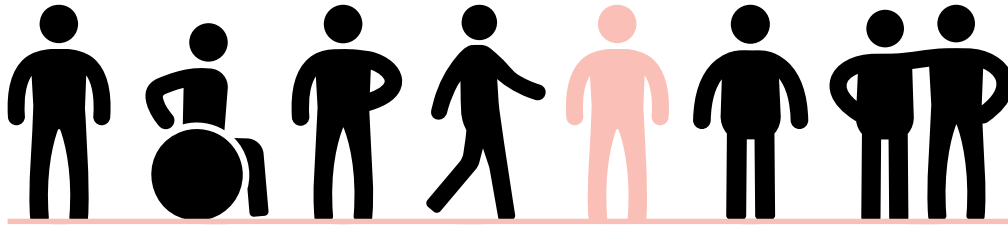
What is an enlarged prostate?

An enlarged prostate is an increase in the size of the prostate. It is not cancer. It's also called benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). An enlarged prostate is very common in men over 50. As the prostate grows, it can cause urinary problems. There are ways to treat it.

What is prostatitis?

Prostatitis may be caused by an inflammation or an infection of the prostate. It is not cancer. It is common and can affect men of any age, but it's most common in men aged between 20 and 50. There are ways to manage it and treat it.

Symptoms vary from person to person but can include urinary problems, aching in the area between your testicles and back passage, or pain in the lower part of your abdomen (stomach area), groin or lower back.



1 in 8 men in the UK will get prostate cancer

What changes should I look out for?

If you notice any changes when you urinate or have any of the problems below, this could be a sign of a prostate problem.

Changes to look out for include:

- needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night
- difficulty starting to urinate
- straining or taking a long time to finish urinating
- a weak flow when you urinate
- a feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly
- a sudden need to urinate - sometimes leaking urine before you get to a toilet
- dribbling urine after you finish urinating
- problems getting or keeping an erection.

Less common changes include:

- pain when urinating
- pain when ejaculating
- blood in your urine or semen.

These symptoms aren't usually caused by a prostate problem, and are more often linked to other health problems.

Urinary problems are common in older men, but it doesn't mean you have to put up with them.

Talk to your GP if you have any of the problems above. They can do tests to find out what's causing them, and give you ways to treat them or manage them yourself.

You might find it helpful to tick any problems you have and show this leaflet to your GP.

What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer develops when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men - 1 in 8 men in the UK will get it in their lifetime. It often grows too slowly to cause any problems. But some prostate cancers grow more quickly and are more likely to spread. This is more likely to cause problems and needs treatment to stop or delay it spreading.

Does prostate cancer have any symptoms?

Most men with early prostate cancer don't have any symptoms.

But some men may have difficulty urinating. Men with prostate cancer that's spread to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer) might have pain in the back, hips or pelvis, problems getting or keeping an erection, blood in the urine or semen, or unexplained weight loss. These symptoms are usually caused by other things that aren't prostate cancer. But it's still a good idea to get them checked out by your GP.

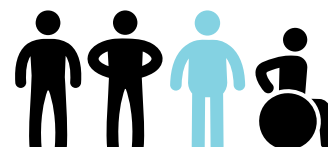
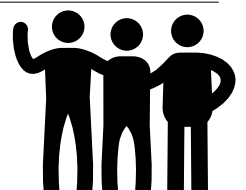
Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

You may be more likely to get prostate cancer if:



you are aged 50 or over - it mainly affects men over 50, and your risk increases as you get older, **or**

your father or brother has had it - you are two and a half times more likely to get it if your father or brother has had it, **or**



you are Black - 1 in 4 Black men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

What should I do next?

If you notice any of the changes we talk about in this leaflet or if you think you might be at risk of prostate cancer, visit your GP. They can provide you with more information about your risk and may talk to you about tests, such as the PSA blood test, if needed.

You or your loved one can also call our Specialist Nurses or chat to them online. They can help with any questions about prostate problems, even if you haven't yet spoken to your GP.

What is the PSA blood test?

The PSA test measures the amount of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in your blood. PSA is a protein made by the prostate. It's normal to have a small amount of PSA in your blood, and the amount rises as you get older because your prostate gets bigger. A raised PSA level may suggest you have a problem with your prostate, but not necessarily cancer.

Who can have a PSA blood test?

There isn't a screening programme for prostate cancer in the UK, so you won't be invited to have a PSA test by your GP. You can have a PSA test at your GP surgery if you're over 50 and you've thought carefully about if it's right for you.

If you're over 45 and have a higher risk of prostate cancer – because you have a family history of it or you're Black – we strongly recommend you speak to your GP about having a PSA test.

What happens if my PSA is raised?

If you have a raised PSA level, your GP may recommend more tests. They might arrange for you to see a specialist at the hospital. The specialist might recommend you have an MRI scan or a biopsy. A biopsy uses a thin needle to take small pieces of prostate tissue to check for cancer. Remember, if you are diagnosed with prostate cancer, there is treatment and support available.

Should I have a PSA blood test?

To help you decide if it's right for you, here are some facts about the PSA test.

- A PSA test can help diagnose prostate cancer before you have any symptoms. It can also help diagnose a fast-growing cancer at an early stage, when treatments are more likely to cure it.
- Regular PSA tests could be helpful, especially if you have a higher risk of prostate cancer. It could detect any unusual increase in your PSA level that might be a sign of prostate cancer.
- But the PSA test on its own can't tell you if you have prostate cancer. It can only tell your doctor if you need further tests.
- The PSA test can sometimes miss prostate cancer. 1 in 7 men with a normal PSA level may have prostate cancer, and 1 in 50 men with a normal PSA level may have a fast-growing cancer.
- And many men with a raised PSA level don't have prostate cancer. PSA can be raised by an enlarged prostate, prostatitis, exercise or ejaculation.
- If your PSA level is raised you may need a biopsy, which can cause side effects. But most men have an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan first and only have a biopsy if the scan finds anything unusual.
- You could be diagnosed with a slow-growing cancer that is unlikely to spread and cause any problems or shorten your life (localised prostate cancer). This may still be worrying and lead you to have treatment you don't need. But most men with this cancer now have it carefully monitored instead.

For more information about the PSA test, read our booklet, **Understanding the PSA blood test: a guide for anyone concerned about prostate cancer.**



Where can I get more information?

You can read more about prostate cancer and other prostate problems, including information about tests and treatments, on our website at prostatecanceruk.org/information

You can also order or download our free booklets, **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems** and **Understanding the PSA blood test: a guide for anyone concerned about prostate cancer**. To order or download them:

- call us on **0800 074 8383**
- visit prostatecanceruk.org/publications



You can also chat to one of our Specialist Nurses on **0800 074 8383**, text **NURSE** to **70004**, or email or chat with them online at prostatecanceruk.org/get-support

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.



You may find it helpful to take our 30 second risk checker at prostatecanceruk.org/kqu-risk

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