What do you know about your prostate?

Information for Black men
In the UK, 1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

This leaflet is for Black men. Your partner, friends or family might also find it helpful.

We explain about prostate cancer and other prostate problems, including who is at risk and what changes to look out for. We also explain what to do if you think you have a prostate problem, and what might happen at the GP surgery.

If you’re worried about prostate cancer or other prostate problems, talk to your GP or call our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383.

What is the prostate?

Only men have a prostate. The prostate 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 (the tube that men urinate and ejaculate through).

It helps to make semen – the fluid that carries sperm.
What can go wrong?

The most common prostate problems are:
• an enlarged prostate – this is the most common prostate problem
• prostatitis – an infection or inflammation of the prostate
• prostate cancer.

Having an enlarged prostate or prostatitis is not the same as having cancer. But you can have an enlarged prostate or prostatitis and prostate cancer at the same time.

An enlarged prostate and prostate cancer are most common in men over 50. Prostatitis is most common in men aged 30 to 50.

What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way.

Prostate cancer often grows slowly and may never cause any problems or affect how long you live. But some men have prostate cancer that grows more quickly. This is more likely to cause problems and needs treatment to stop or delay it spreading outside the prostate. There are several treatments available for prostate cancer.
What is my risk of prostate cancer?

Only men can get prostate cancer. You may be more likely to get prostate cancer if:

**You are Black** – 1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives. Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other men. We still don’t know why, but it might be linked to genes.

**You are aged 50 or over** – it mainly affects men over 50 and your risk increases with age. Black men may get prostate cancer at a younger age, so if you’re over 45 and are worried about your risk, see your GP.

**Your father or brother has had it** – you are two and a half times more likely to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has had it, compared to a man with no relatives with prostate cancer.

**Your risk of prostate cancer might be higher if your mother or sister has had breast cancer**, particularly if it was linked to faults in the genes BRCA1 or BRCA2.

Can I prevent prostate cancer?

No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer, but staying a healthy weight may be important. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of prostate cancer that’s more likely to spread outside the prostate. Read more in our leaflet, Diet, activity and your risk of prostate cancer.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer that’s contained inside the prostate (localised prostate cancer) doesn’t usually cause any symptoms. Some men may have urinary problems (see page 9). These may be mild and slowly get worse over many years.

For some men the first symptoms of prostate cancer might be new pain in the back, hips or pelvis. This can be caused by cancer that has spread to the bones. These symptoms are often caused by other problems, such as general aches or arthritis. But it’s still a good idea to get them checked out by your GP.

A personal story

Denton was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 42

“I had no symptoms at all when I was diagnosed. I had recently lost my father to the disease and that spurred me on to visit the doctor, as I knew this meant I was more likely to develop it. I had treatment and have been living with prostate cancer for 12 years. My father’s death gave me life and now I use my time to raise awareness.”
It's not easy for men to talk about their health, especially in my community.

A personal experience
Other prostate problems

An enlarged prostate
The prostate gets bigger as you get older. This is called an enlarged prostate. It is common in men over 50. It is sometimes called benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). It is not cancer and there are ways to treat it.

An enlarged prostate is the most common cause of urinary problems in men as they get older. As the prostate grows, it can press on the tube you urinate through (urethra) and slow down or stop the flow of urine.

Find out more in our booklet, Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.

A personal story
Ron was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate at 54
“I began to have urinary problems, so visited my GP. He carried out a digital rectal examination – an uncomfortable experience but it was over quickly. I was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate and began taking medicines to help my urine flow. My quality of life improved in all areas.”
**Prostatitis**

Prostatitis is a set of symptoms thought to be caused by an infection or inflammation of the prostate. It is not cancer. Prostatitis is a common condition which can affect men of any age, but is most common in men aged between 30 and 50.

It can cause a wide range of symptoms, which vary from man to man. Symptoms can include some of the changes described on page 9, aching in the area between your testicles and back passage (rectum) or pain in the lower part of your abdomen (stomach area), groin or lower back. In severe cases it can cause fever and sweating, and needs treating in hospital.

Find out more in our booklet, *Prostatitis: A guide to infection or inflammation of the prostate.*

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**A personal story**

**James was diagnosed with prostatitis at 26**

“There were so many different symptoms that I thought it’s probably kidney or bladder related, I really wasn’t sure. I had a digital rectal examination and that was how I was diagnosed with prostatitis. I was put on a course of antibiotics and painkillers.”
What changes should I look out for?

If you notice any changes when you urinate or have trouble controlling your bladder, this could be a sign of a prostate problem.

Changes to look out for include:

- needing to urinate more often than usual, including at night – for example if you often need to go again after two hours
- difficulty starting to urinate
- straining, or taking a long time to finish urinating
- a weak flow when you urinate
- a feeling that you’re not emptying your bladder fully
- needing to rush to urinate – sometimes leaking before you get there
- dribbling urine after you finish.

Less common symptoms include:

- pain when urinating
- pain when ejaculating
- blood in your urine or semen – this can be caused by other health problems. Talk to your GP if you see any blood in your urine or semen.
- problems getting or keeping an erection – this isn’t a common symptom of a prostate problem and is usually linked to other health conditions.

You might find it helpful to tick any problems you have and show this leaflet to your GP.
What do you know about your prostate?

Speak to your spouse or partner and consult your GP. Never fail to exercise your rights, be inquisitive.

A personal experience
What should I do next?

If you notice any of the changes we talk about in this leaflet or you’re worried about your risk of prostate cancer, visit your GP. You can also call our Specialist Nurses.

Urinary problems will often be caused by something else rather than cancer and there are treatments and lifestyle changes that can help.

What will happen at the GP surgery?

If you have symptoms, your GP will ask you about them. They might do a few tests to find out if you have a prostate problem.

Urine test
They might ask for a urine sample to check for blood or infection that could be causing your symptoms.

PSA blood test
You may be offered a blood test called a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. PSA is a protein produced by cells in the prostate. Your PSA level rises as you get older. A raised PSA may suggest you have a problem in your prostate. A PSA test alone can’t tell you exactly what the problem is. Your GP will need to look at your PSA level and other test results.

You have the right to a PSA test if you’re over 50 and you’ve talked through the pros and cons with your GP. Black men may get prostate cancer at a younger age than men of other ethnicities, so you might want to talk to your GP about having a PSA test if you’re over 45.

Read more in our leaflet, The PSA test and prostate cancer: A quick guide.
Digital rectal examination (DRE)
For this test, your doctor will slide a finger gently into your back passage (rectum). They will wear gloves and put some gel on their finger to make it more comfortable. The doctor will feel your prostate for any hard or bumpy areas and to get an idea of its size. You may find this embarrassing or uncomfortable, but it shouldn’t be painful and it doesn’t take long. The test helps your doctor find out whether you have a problem that may need treating.

A personal story
Ally was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 59
“When I had the DRE I thought – for a few seconds of discomfort I can live with it. It’s something that I always say to guys – yeah, it is uncomfortable and it is not brilliant but if it’s going to save your life, for a few seconds deal with it. Don’t die of embarrassment.”

Read more in our booklet, Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems.
What if I am not registered with a GP?

If you’re not registered with a GP ask your family or friends who live near you which doctor they go to. Or you can find one near you on the following websites:

- www.nhs.uk in England
- www.nhs24.com in Scotland
- www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk in Wales
- www.hscni.net in Northern Ireland.

Worried about going to your GP?

It is natural to feel worried or embarrassed about having tests and check-ups. But don’t let that stop you going to your doctor.

Remember, the tests give your doctor the best idea about whether you have a problem that needs treating. You can ask to see a male doctor when you make the appointment.

Where can I find out more?

Call our Specialist Nurses on 0800 074 8383 or text NURSE to 70004. You can also email or chat online with our nurses on our website. They can send you our free leaflets about prostate cancer and other prostate problems. Visit prostatecanceruk.org/get-support
I visited my GP after I watched a television programme about prostate cancer and thought I could be at risk.

A personal experience
Other useful organisations

Association for Prostate Awareness (APA)
[www.prostate-awareness.co.uk](http://www.prostate-awareness.co.uk)
Raises awareness of prostate cancer and offers support to men, their families and carers. APA is based in East London and works with the Black community.

Cancer Black Care
[www.cancerblackcare.org.uk](http://www.cancerblackcare.org.uk)
Telephone: 020 8961 4151
Information and support for all people affected by cancer. Raises awareness of cancer in Black and minority ethnic communities.

About Prostate Cancer UK

Prostate Cancer UK fights to help more men survive prostate cancer and enjoy a better life. We do this through Men United, our movement for everyone who believes men are worth fighting for. You can join Men United at [prostatecanceruk.org/menunited](http://prostatecanceruk.org/menunited)

At Prostate Cancer UK, we take care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate diseases. We hope these will add to the medical advice you have had and help you to make decisions. Our services are not intended to replace advice from your doctor.

References to sources of information used in the production of this leaflet can be found on our website.

The photos in this leaflet are of people personally affected by prostate problems. The quotes with the photos are not always the words of the people who appear.