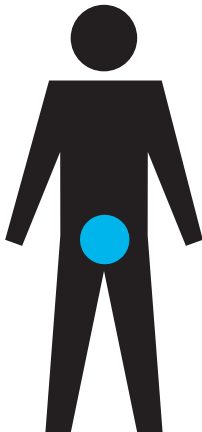


SPOTLIGHT ON

Watchful Waiting to manage prostate cancer



What is the prostate?

Only men (and those born biologically male) have a prostate; it's usually about the size of a walnut. It is inside the pelvis, just below the bladder and in front of the back passage. It wraps around the tube that allows urine to flow out of the bladder and for semen to pass out through the penis.

What does the prostate do?

It supplies the fluid to protect and nourish sperm during intercourse. Prostate Specific Antigen or PSA is also made in the prostate. Some PSA leaks out into the blood and can be measured. This is called your PSA level.

What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer happens when the cells in the prostate grow and multiply more quickly than normal. This causes a growth or tumour. The chance of developing cancerous cells or cancer in the prostate increases as a man gets older. However, most prostate cancers grow slowly and for some men prostate cancer doesn't have any effect on or shorten their life.

Symptoms that you may have:

- needing to pass urine more often than before and during the night;
- finding it difficult to start passing urine;
- seeing blood in your urine;
- needing to get to the toilet quickly;
- taking longer to empty your bladder;
- stopping and starting when passing urine.

How do you know I have prostate cancer?

Your urologist, clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or GP may have noticed that:

- Your PSA level is raised;
- And/or your digital rectal examination (DRE) was abnormal;
- Or a scan or biopsy showed prostate cancer.

Watchful waiting for prostate cancer

Some men with prostate cancer that has not spread won't need treatment straight away – and indeed some men may never need it. Your urologist or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) believes that 'Watchful Waiting or Watch and Wait' is most appropriate for you. It means that you won't have any active treatment for your prostate cancer. Instead your GP or Practice Nurse will keep an eye on you by doing a check- up now and again; asking about your symptoms, any new symptoms that you have noticed and considering your PSA test results. It's a way of keeping an eye on you. Usually you won't have any further/other tests for your prostate cancer, unless the GP, urologist or CNS thinks your cancer may be starting to change or grow.

Over the coming years, your prostate cancer may grow and could eventually spread; at this stage it can't be cured but it can still be treated. Hormone treatment might be started at this point, to dampen down the activity of the cancer cells now and hopefully for several years after with the hope and expectation that the prostate cancer would not affect your life expectancy.

Why has watchful waiting been suggested as appropriate for me?

If the urologist believes that:

- i. You have the type of prostate cancer that grows very slowly, is unlikely to spread and your symptoms are not too troublesome
- ii. You have another health condition(s) which means you wouldn't be well enough to have other prostate cancer treatments because of the additional risks to you and the bothersome side-effects that treatment might cause. Instead, the doctor may concentrate on managing the other illnesses you have that may affect you and your quality of life more than your prostate cancer;
- iii. You are of an age where there is no clear evidence that treating your prostate cancer to try to cure it would bring life expectancy benefits over watchful waiting.

Living with Watchful Waiting

Knowing that you have prostate cancer that isn't going to be treated may sound quite scary and you'll probably wonder why. Your doctor will only ever suggest 'watchful waiting' if they think it's best for you and how you are; men on watchful waiting may never need treatment for their prostate cancer or it may be years before they need treatment.

The plus side of being on watchful waiting is that you won't get the side-effects that treatment for prostate cancer may cause (such as erectile dysfunction, incontinence). However, for some men not having treatment can be very worrying, causing some stress and anxiety. If you feel very anxious or upset then there are people that you can speak to. You'll find some suggestions of help and who you can speak to at the end of this leaflet.

Who will look after me?

Most likely your GP or Practice Nurse will keep an eye on your prostate cancer by seeing you on a fairly regular basis, most likely doing a PSA test and they will certainly ask about symptoms and in particular about any new symptoms that you are having. You may also be monitored by your hospital team.

How often might I see my doctor?

Usually every 6 to 12 months.

What symptoms should I look out for to let my GP/practice nurse know about?

It's important to let your doctor know about any change in your symptoms and any new symptoms while your cancer is being looked after/monitored by watchful waiting. You might find it helpful to jot down any new symptoms or questions that you want to ask before you go to your appointment.

Let the GP or Practice Nurse know if you:

- Have pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs;
- Have an unexplained weight loss;
- See blood in your urine.

What will happen if it's found my cancer is growing?

Your doctor may suggest you start hormone therapy. This will be to help control the cancer and ease your symptoms rather than cure the cancer.

What could I do to help me cope with my prostate cancer?

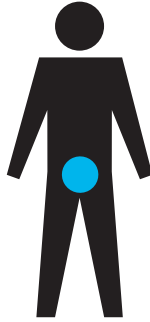
1. Talk to the people that you care about and that care about you; your family and friends can be a great support. As prostate cancer can run in families, if you have sons or brothers it may be helpful to let them know about your diagnosis so they can speak to their GP about their increased risk.
2. There may be a prostate cancer support group in your area that you can go along to. Often these groups have men who are also being looked after by watchful waiting and are happy to share their experiences and provide some support.
3. If you are feeling very unhappy, worried, anxious or just 'down in the dumps' then speak with your GP. He/she may be able to refer you to a counselling service for some help and support.
4. There are support organisations like Maggie's Centres and there may also be local cancer support organisations/groups specific to your area.

You may find the Prostate Scotland website helpful www.prostatescotland.org.uk For details of support groups you can search Prostate Scotland Support Groups.

For general information on cancer and support, you can search NHS Inform Cancer Services Directory.

5. Everyone can have a bad day and it may be difficult to stay positive all the time, that's quite normal. Try not to worry too much and take each day as it comes.
6. Look after yourself by eating properly, staying as fit and active as you are able and keeping yourself busy. Getting out in the fresh air for a stroll can be helpful as well as refreshing.
7. Talk to your GP or CNS if you have any questions.

Organisation	Website	Contact number	Helpline available
Prostate Scotland	www.prostatescotland.org.uk	0131 603 8660	Telephone information service (not a helpline) 0300 666 0236
NHS 24	www.nhs24.com	111	✓
Prostate Link UK	www.prostate-link.org.uk		
Prostate Cancer UK	www.prostatecancer.org.uk	0141 314 0050	✓ 0800 074 8383
Macmillan Cancer Support	www.macmillan.org.uk	0808 808 0000	✓
Cancer Research UK	www.cancerresearchuk.org		✓
Edinburgh and Lothian Prostate Cancer Support Group Buddy support is also available	www.elprostatecancersupport.co.uk	07933 260 066	✓
Livingston group	email charliehogg@blueyonder.co.uk	01506 845 981	
Prostate Cancer Support Group, Maggie's Dundee	email Lynn.Downie@maggiescentres.org	01382 632999	
UCAN Care Centre Ward 209, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	www.ucanhelp.org.uk	01224 550 333 (voicemail)	
Maggie's Gartnavel General Hospital, 1053 Great Western Road Glasgow G12 0YN	glasgow@maggiescentres.org	0141 357 2269	
Prostate Cancer Support Group, Fife Maggie's Centre Victoria Infirmary, Kirkcaldy		01592 647 997	
Scottish Borders Prostate Cancer Support Group Macmillan Centre, Borders General Hospital		01721 722655	
Webmd	www.webmd.com		
Patient UK	www.patient.co.uk		
Medicine net	www.medicinenet.com		



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