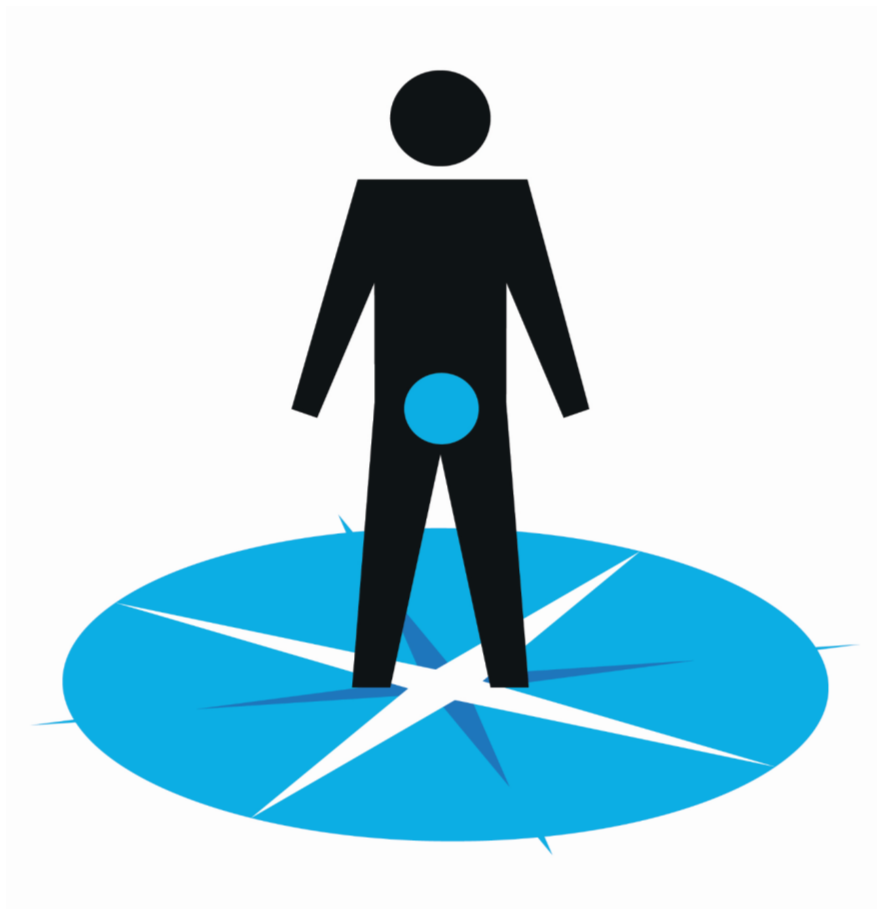


Prostate health

**A guide to healthier
lifestyle choices**



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

This leaflet is about healthy lifestyle choices in relation to prostate health.

Frequently there are stories in the media often giving conflicting advice about foods that are 'good for you' or 'bad for you'; all this information can be confusing. Generally doctors agree that men at average risk of prostate disease/cancer can make choices that benefit their overall health – choosing healthier foods, exercising regularly, not smoking and keeping alcohol within recommended guidelines. That said there are some foods that may be beneficial for prostate health and information on these can be found within.

ABOUT THE PROSTATE

Only men have a prostate. It starts out about the size of a pea then slowly grows reaching about the size of a walnut when the man is in his 20s. Around the age of 40, it starts to grow or enlarge again and this may cause problems for a man when passing urine.

The prostate is inside the pelvis, just below the bladder and in front of the back passage. It wraps around the tube, called the urethra, which allows urine to flow out of the bladder and semen to pass out through the penis. Therefore, the prostate can't be seen or checked from outside the body.

WHAT DOES THE PROSTATE DO?

It supplies a thick, clear fluid that mixes with sperm to form semen, called the ejaculate. This fluid helps to nourish and protect sperm during intercourse. One of the proteins made in the prostate is Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). Because some PSA leaks out of the prostate, it's normal to find PSA in a man's blood, called PSA level.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG WITH THE PROSTATE?

Conditions that may affect your prostate;

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) : This is a very common condition after the age 50. The prostate enlarges often causing problems passing urine.

Prostatitis : This means that there is inflammation or infection in the prostate. It can affect men of all ages but most commonly between the ages of 30 – 50.

Prostate cancer : This means that cells in the prostate grow faster than normal in an uncontrolled way causing a growth called a tumour.

Common signs or symptoms of something going wrong with the prostate

Hesitancy	Standing waiting before urine starts to flow
Frequency	Passing urine more often than before
Intermittent stream	Stopping and starting and straining to get urine to flow
Weak stream	Dribbly flow, longer to empty bladder
Dribbling	Urine trickles out and no control over this
Urgency	Having to get to the toilet Fast
Nocturia	Passing urine several times during the night

If these symptoms sound familiar to you or in someone you know then it is best to make an appointment with the GP.

There is a symptom checker on our website that may be helpful. It does not give a diagnosis but will give a guide to severity of symptoms and possible next steps. www.prostatescotland.org.uk

Early detection, diagnosis and treatment of prostate problems is key to improving the quality of life for men affected by prostate disease/cancer.

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

For healthier food choices you may want to think about:

- Eating a well-balanced diet;
- It's advisable to reduce the number of times in the week that you eat red meats and instead switch to having more fish every week;
- Avoid focusing on any one food or foodstuff that is thought to be a "cancer-fighting" food;
- Mega-doses (very large doses) of any individual vitamin or mineral may in fact not be recommended.

Cooking methods

The way food is cooked is also very important. It's been found that when beef, pork, chicken, fish, sausages and burgers are grilled at high temperatures cancer causing substances can be found in the foods.

Similarly, when these foods are cooked on a barbecue another type of cancer causing substance is formed on the surface of the meat by smoke and flames when the fat and juices from the meats drip down onto the barbecue coals or gas flame below.

To help avoid this stew, braise or poach foods or don't allow foods to become 'blackened' on the barbecue.

EXERCISE

Recent studies have all pointed to the benefit of taking regular exercise. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day, at least 5 times a week. Moderate exercise can include going for a brisk walk, swimming, mowing the lawn, doing the gardening or washing and polishing the car. This may help with your general health and feeling of wellbeing and may help if you need to lose some weight. There are lots of people to help you get started; there may be specialist exercise programmes at your local leisure centre or join a local walking or exercise group.

If you haven't exercised for a long time then you will need to build this up gradually and always check with your doctor before starting to exercise.

ALCOHOL

As long as you've not been told otherwise, it's best to keep alcohol intake to a moderate amount and within sensible drinking limits, trying to have a couple of 'alcohol free' days each week.

For more information on sensible drinking limits go to www.drinkaware.co.uk Helpful sections include 'Understanding unit guidelines', 'Should you take a break from alcohol' and 'How much alcohol is too much'.

SMOKING

Smoking can affect your health in many ways so the best advice is to give up. Giving up can be difficult and it may be worth discussing this with your local pharmacist, GP, or local stop smoking advisor or cessation clinic.

Smokeline is the national stop smoking service for Scotland. Smokeline advisors give free advice and information about how to stop smoking, can offer advice on quitting, support during cravings, information on using NRT and signpost to local services. Free stop smoking services are provided by every health board in Scotland. Call 0800 84 84 84 to find out more.

WEIGHT AND THE PROSTATE

Being overweight can bring with it many health problems so, if appropriate, you may want to think about losing weight. Recent studies have found that being overweight or very overweight may increase your risk of developing prostate cancer that's more likely to spread (be aggressive) or cancer that has already spread outside the prostate (advanced prostate cancer).

Studies have found that men who are overweight or very overweight especially around their middle or waist area may be putting themselves at a higher risk of developing BPH.

Although studies have not discovered a link between weight and prostatitis, it is suggested that if the man is overweight then losing weight may help relieve symptoms of prostatitis.

The best way to start losing weight is to cut down the amount of calories you eat and at the same time take more exercise each day (see exercise section).

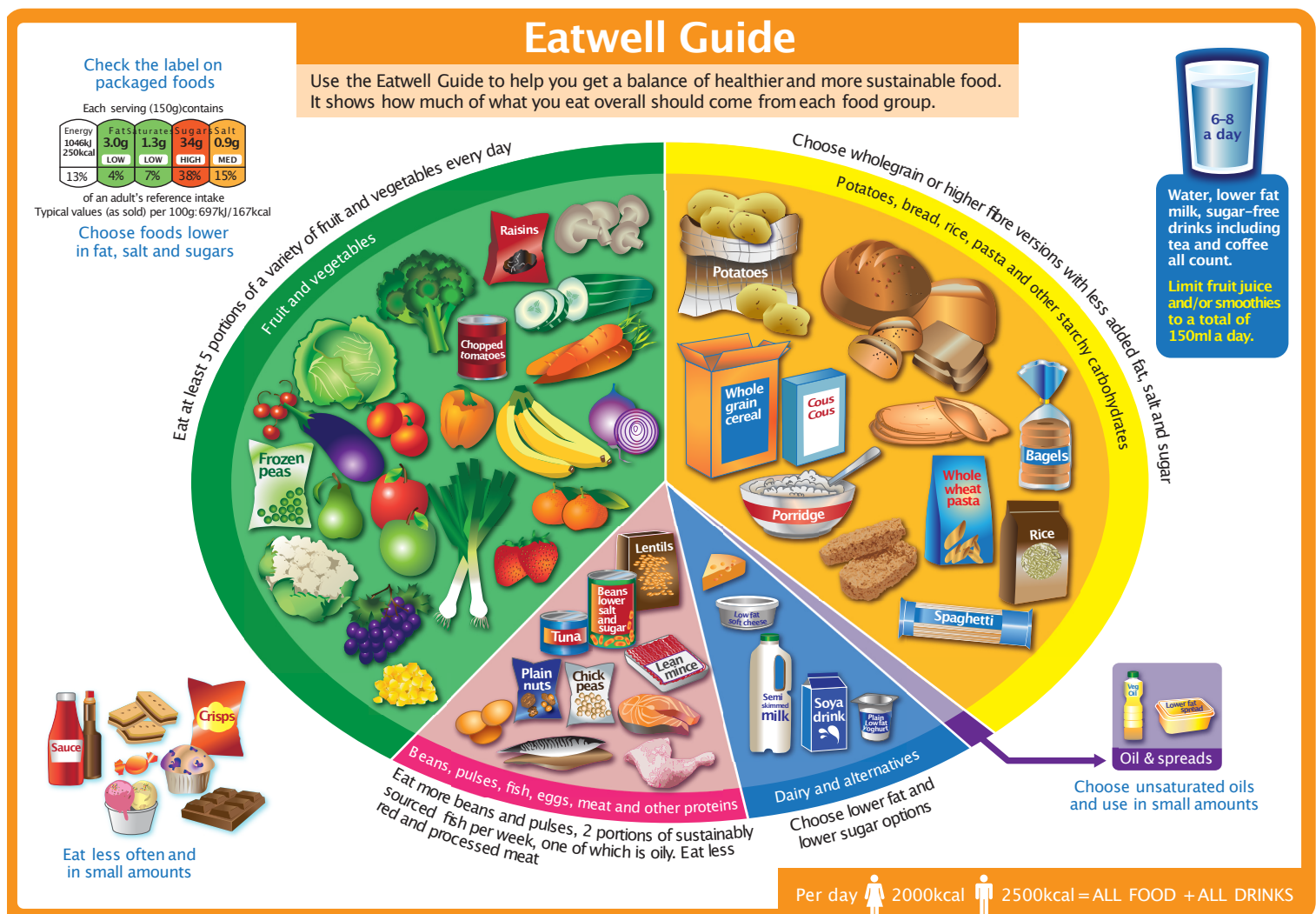
Start by cutting down or cutting out sugar, sugary drinks, sweets, chocolate, cakes, puddings, fried foods, crisps and take-aways. Your doctor may refer you to a weight loss clinic or dietitian.

Prostate health : About fruit, vegetables, nutrients and supplements

Fruit and Vegetables

Plant foods produce phytochemicals and research seems to indicate that they might have a protective effect for us against diseases. Many phytochemicals have antioxidant actions. Certain vitamins, minerals and other compounds are referred to as antioxidants and seem to protect the cells in our bodies from damage. Although not all results are conclusive, many studies have shown that antioxidants may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer including prostate cancer.

Enjoy a wide variety of different types and colours of fruit and vegetables and have at least five portions each day. These can be; fresh, frozen, tinned, or dried. Occasionally one portion (150ml or 5 fluid ounces) can be taken as fresh fruit juice if you prefer or as a smoothie. Another easy way to include vegetables is by adding to soups, stews, casseroles or sauces. Let's take a look at the role of specific fruits and vegetables which have been reported to be associated with a lower risk of prostate cancer and why that might be.



RED GROUP

Tomatoes

A very good source of lycopene which can have a protective effect on the prostate. It is easier for the body to use lycopene if the tomatoes are cooked rather than raw. Some studies suggest that cooking these in olive oil is even more beneficial. Perhaps aim to have meals with a tomato-based sauce around twice a week.

If having uncooked tomatoes, it seems that choosing dark red tomatoes on-the-vine may be best.

You might like to try including foods containing lycopene every day - tomato sauce, tomato soup, tinned tomatoes, tomato juice, sundried tomatoes, tomato ketchup, tomato puree or tomatoes. It would seem from research that having lycopene from tomato products in your diet is much better than taking lycopene supplements.

Watermelon, pink grapefruit are fair sources of lycopene. As grapefruit/juice can react with some medications, ask for more guidance from the pharmacist or your GP.

GREEN GROUP

Broccoli, bok choy, cabbage, sprouts, cauliflower, kale, radishes, swede, turnip, watercress

You may also hear these called cruciferous vegetables. It has been suggested that you should try to have at least 5 portions of these vegetables each day.

Some studies have suggested these can be beneficial/protective for prostate health.

RED/PURPLE GROUP

Pomegranates, grapes, plums and red/purple berries

Pomegranates contain polyphenols. Some studies have suggested drinking a small glass (8ozs) of pomegranate juice daily may have a small helpful effect on prostate cancer and studies are continuing to find out more, but as yet nothing has been conclusive.

So although nothing has been proven, it may be beneficial to include pomegranate or pomegranate juice.

A word of caution; pomegranate juice may affect how your body processes or reacts with certain medications, so it may be best to speak with a pharmacist or your GP before drinking pomegranate juice. If drinking pomegranate juice check if sugar has been added.

YELLOW/GREEN AND WHITE/GREEN GROUP

Spinach, corn on the cob, green peas, avocado, garlic, onions, asparagus, leeks, shallots, and chives honeydew melon

Include as part of your healthy diet every week.

ORANGE/YELLOW

Oranges, mangoes, apricots, peaches, papaya, nectarines, tangerines cantaloupes, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and carrots.

Include as part of your healthy diet every week.

Particular nutrients or supplements

SAW PALMETTO

The berries of this plant are used in herbal remedies and pushed as a treatment for BPH. A number of studies have suggested that it helps relieve some of the symptoms of BPH; such as having to pass urine frequently during the night or difficulty in passing urine. It would seem that some men find a mild improvement of these symptoms when taking saw palmetto.

At this time however, there are no available study results that show that saw palmetto can prevent or treat prostate cancer.

VITAMIN E

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin that is an anti-oxidant. Previously it was thought that taking a vitamin E supplement may have helped reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

However, a recent study has suggested the opposite; that men who regularly took Vitamin E supplements may in fact have a slightly higher risk of developing prostate cancer compared to men who didn't.

SELENIUM

Selenium is needed to keep us healthy but only very small amounts are required. Some studies have shown that there may be an increased risk of prostate cancer in men who have low selenium levels. Alternately, the SELECT trial in 2014 found that for men who didn't have prostate cancer and who already had high levels of selenium, taking selenium supplements increased their risk of prostate cancer by 91%.

The best dietary sources of selenium are:

Brazil nuts, Whole grains, and cereals

Sunflower seed kernels, dry roasted, tuna, fish and other sea-foods, liver kidney, meat, poultry, eggs. It has been suggested that having one or two brazil nuts every day would provide enough selenium in your diet.

The body cannot cope with too much selenium. If the selenium level is too high it can become poisonous.

Taking too much selenium over a period of weeks or months can cause gradual toxic effects.

Before starting selenium supplements, it may be a good idea to take some medical advice.

MODIFIED CITRUS PECTIN (MCP)

Pectin is a natural substance found in the cell walls of a variety of fruits and vegetables. Pectin from oranges, grapefruit, lemons, and limes is called citrus pectin. Modified citrus pectin means it has been changed so it is easier for the body to digest and take in.

Some claims have been made that MCP may help stop prostate cancer from spreading. Whilst there have been a few small studies looking into this, there is no proof that MCP reliably slows the spread of cancer in humans.

ZINC

Zinc is an "essential trace element" because very small amounts are needed to keep us healthy; less than 10mg each day. Zinc is found in many foods; oysters and other shellfish top the list, but good sources are also found in red meats cooked dried beans, peas, lentils and in the bran of many grains.

Two recent studies have suggested that there isn't a link between dietary zinc and prostate cancer and taking a small zinc supplement didn't appear to affect risk. However, the studies further suggested that taking high-dose zinc supplements over a long period of time (10 years or longer), then these men were almost 2 and half times more likely to develop advanced prostate cancer than those who didn't take any supplements at all.

It seems that the use of zinc and zinc supplements is still a work in progress and more research is needed before there is a definitive answer.

**Before buying and taking any supplements
you should let your GP know and ask for more guidance**

SOY

Some studies suggest that having soy foods may lower PSA in men with prostate cancer and as a result might slow down the growth of prostate cancer and help prevent the cancer coming back after treatment. However, not all studies of soy foods or soy isoflavone supplements have shown a benefit so more research is needed. Current evidence seems to suggest that following an overall healthy eating diet and, should you decide to include some soy food (eg 1-2 serves per day) this isn't likely to have a harmful effect.

If you decide to include some soy foods then you could try soybeans (whole beans, cooked, roasted or steamed), soy milk, tofu, tempeh and miso as part of a healthy diet.

FOOD SUPPLEMENT WITH POMEGRANATE

This is a food supplement that contains broccoli, pomegranate, green tea, and turmeric. A trial following the health of men with prostate cancer taking Pomi T found that after six months, they had a smaller increase or sometimes even a decrease in PSA, as compared to men with prostate cancer who didn't take Pomi-T.

The researchers suggest that the unique blend of polyphenols and antioxidants in the supplement had a beneficial effect on health of these prostate cancer patients.

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D along with calcium helps build strong bones and helps keep our bones healthy. Vitamin D is made when the sun (or more accurately when UVB rays from the sun) shines on our skin. You can buy vitamin D supplements over the counter. Please be aware that taking too many vitamin D supplements over a long period of time can cause too much calcium to build up in the body (hypercalcaemia) that can weaken the bones and damage the kidneys and the heart. If you are in any doubt at all, you should ask for more advice from your doctor or pharmacist.

Cod liver oil does contain vitamin D but an even greater amount of vitamin A. Your body finds it difficult to get rid of vitamin A and too much vitamin A can be harmful.

POLYPHENOLS

Polyphenols are anti-oxidants found in plant foods. Good sources of polyphenols include blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, citrus fruits, dark grapes, cherries, apples, dark plums and blackberries. Dark grape juice is also a good source.

From time to time articles appear in the media about the benefits of drinking green tea which is also a good source of polyphenols. Studies of men who drank green tea or took green tea extract as a supplement have been reported to have had a reduced risk of prostate cancer. If you like to drink tea, consider sometimes substituting green tea instead of your usual brew. Green tea also has less caffeine than black tea.

It has been suggested by some researchers that regularly drinking 6 cups of coffee or more each day (whether ordinary or de-cafeinated) may reduce the risk of developing the aggressive form of prostate cancer. In fact it has been suggested in a study that drinking even 1 – 3 cups of coffee each day was associated with a lower risk of developing prostate cancer.

Coffee was chosen for the study as it contains many substances that act as antioxidants. However, researchers are continuing to look into why coffee seems to have this beneficial effect and more studies are required before conclusive advice can be given.

Red wine contains antioxidants, Resveratrol and Polyphenols; it is thought that these are responsible for some health giving properties of red wine.

However, it is best not to go over the recommended guidelines for any type of alcohol.

A cautionary word about caffeine

Caffeine can irritate the prostate and the bladder and can have an effect on symptoms of BPH and prostatitis, so it would perhaps make sense to cut down on the amount of caffeine. Caffeine is found in black tea and ordinary coffee and to a much lesser extent green tea. Cola type drinks, energy and performance drinks and energy shots have high amounts of caffeine added.

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The information contained in this leaflet has been developed by Prostate Scotland and reviewed by its Advisory Group of doctors, nurses and patients. This leaflet is not intended to replace medical advice or seeing a doctor for specific illnesses or symptoms.

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