

# PROSTATE DISEASE and PROSTATE CANCER

## A brief guide to a major issue

You've probably heard of the prostate before but not many people have a clear idea of what it is, where it is or what can go wrong with it. Our survey in Scotland in 2018 found that just over 50% of the general public surveyed could name a symptom of prostate disease/cancer with only 1/3 men over 55 able to name a symptom of prostate disease/cancer.

### About the prostate

Men (and those born biologically male) have a prostate. It's a small gland about the size of a walnut underneath the bladder and in front of the back passage. The urethra (water pipe) runs through the middle of the prostate. It is the tube that urine flows through when you are voiding/peeing.

What can go wrong with it?

- The prostate enlarging (getting bigger) with age called **BPE**
- An infection/inflammation in the prostate called **prostatitis**
- **Prostate cancer**

Symptoms of prostate disease can cause problems passing urine and generally affect your quality of life.

### Symptoms

The symptom(s) you may have	Your doctor might call it
Having to pee more often	Frequency
Getting up to pee 2 or more times during the night	Nocturia
Waiting for a while before urine starts to flow then straining to keep going	Hesitancy/poor flow
Having to get to the toilet fast with the risk of getting 'caught short'	Urgency
Taking longer to empty the bladder; stopping and starting when peeing	Incomplete emptying
Having some pain or burning feeling when peeing	Dysuria
After finishing, a bit more urine can trickle out with no control over this	Dribbling

**Some men diagnosed with prostate cancer may not have/have had any symptoms at all.** However, when any of the symptoms above are troublesome to you (or for someone you know) then why not make an appointment with the GP; these *could* be symptoms of prostate disease/cancer.

Why not try our symptom checker? Visit [www.prostatescotland.org.uk/symptom-checker](http://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/symptom-checker). It's aimed at providing a useful guide to the severity of your symptoms, but will not give a diagnosis.

### Seeing the GP

The GP will most likely:

- Ask about symptoms, especially about difficulties in passing urine
- Ask about family history – if anyone in your family has/had prostate cancer
- Test your urine for any signs of infection and for the presence of glucose, a type of sugar. If there is glucose in urine it may raise suspicion of diabetes.
- Take some blood tests and talk to you about a **PSA blood test**
- Possibly do a physical examination of the prostate (DRE).

Don't worry or be embarrassed about speaking to your GP as they will have dealt with prostate disease/cancer many times before. It's best to ask for help with prostate symptoms as soon as they start to trouble you as early detection, diagnosis and treatment is key to improving the quality of life for men affected by prostate disease/cancer.

### About the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test

PSA is made in the prostate. When the prostate is inflamed, enlarged or affected by prostate cancer more PSA can leak from the prostate raising the PSA level in the blood, indicating there may be something going wrong with the prostate.

Men aged 50 and over are entitled to a PSA test and can discuss it with their GP or Practice Nurse. Those with a family history of prostate cancer or breast cancer with a BRCA 1 and 2 gene alteration or black men should discuss their risk and PSA test with their GP from mid 40's onwards.

At the moment, there is no routine screening for prostate cancer in the UK. Current guidelines for GPs states that **"The PSA test is available free to any man over the age of 50 who requests it."**

For more information about the PSA test please visit our website <https://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/resources/The-PSA-Test.pdf>

### About the Digital rectal examination or DRE

This is a straight forward physical examination of the prostate. The GP slides a gloved finger into the back passage to feel the size, shape and condition of the prostate and check for any lumps or hardened areas. The examination doesn't take long and shouldn't be painful but may feel very slightly uncomfortable. So although you may feel a bit embarrassed or worried about the DRE it can help the doctor decide what may be best for you.

### RISK FACTORS

**Age** - After the age of 40 the prostate begins to grow or enlarge. When this starts to cause problems in passing urine or not being able to pass urine doctors call this BPE or benign prostatic enlargement. After the age of 50 (possibly mid 40s if there is a family history of prostate cancer), a man is more at risk of prostate cancer.

**Your family** - It's been found that prostate cancer can run in families. A man is 2-3 times more at risk if his dad, grandad or brother has or has had prostate cancer. If close female blood relatives have breast cancer caused by a genetic alteration eg BRCA1 and 2 gene, then close male blood relatives are more at risk of developing prostate cancer.

**Your background** - Black men and those from an African/Caribbean background are 3 times more at risk of getting prostate cancer and up to 5 years earlier.



Your lifestyle

Your lifestyle can play a role in prostate health.	
Healthy diet	Eating a wide variety of at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day, trying to include cooked tomatoes every day and reducing the number of times you eat red meat and processed meat to 2-3 times a week.
Weight	Studies suggest that men who are very overweight may increase their risk of developing BPE and prostate cancer that's more likely to spread.
Exercise	Taking regular daily exercise for at least 30 minutes each day may help lower your risk.
Smoking	This can affect your health in many ways so the best advice is to stop smoking.
Alcohol	Unless told not to take alcohol, keep to only having alcohol within the sensible drinking limits.

SUPPORTING YOU IF DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER

Our COMPASS support service is to help men and their families navigate their way along their prostate cancer journey:

- Free to download Prostate Scotland Cancer Navigator app packed full of information.
- A 6 week Living Well with Prostate Cancer course.
- Online exercise videos
- A 12-week exercise and well being course run in partnership with football clubs in some areas of Scotland
- For more information go to:  
<https://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/support-services>

SUPPORTING PROSTATE SCOTLAND TO DO MORE

Raising funds

You can help support our work by raising funds for us. Prostate Scotland is only able to raise awareness and deliver support to men and their families affected by prostate disease/cancer through the generosity of those who make donations towards our work. You can become involved by:

- Making a donation
- Becoming involved as a fundraiser.

To make a donation go to [www.prostatescotland.org.uk/donate](http://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/donate) or contact us on [donate@prostatescotland.org.uk](mailto:donate@prostatescotland.org.uk)

Volunteering

As a small organisation we rely on our network of volunteers throughout Scotland. By giving up some of your time, we can reach many more men and their families. We welcome a wide range of volunteers with a variety of skills and experience and have a number of volunteering roles available. See our volunteering pages for current volunteer roles. <https://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/support-prostate-scotland/volunteering>

What we offer

Our website offers men and their families relevant, accurate and up-to-date information about prostate disease/cancer including information about symptoms, treatments, video interviews from men with prostate disease and films by leading doctors about prostate disease/cancer.

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

We have a wide range of information leaflets and booklets on BPE, prostatitis and prostate cancer and their treatments. These can be downloaded from our website or call us and we'll send you a copy of the booklet(s).

[www.prostatescotland.org.uk/resources](http://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/resources)

For organisations/businesses, we can offer our Workplace Tool Kit and 'ToolBox Workshops' to help them to raise awareness of prostate disease/prostate cancer with their employees.

[www.prostatescotland.org.uk/for-professionals](http://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/for-professionals)

Some facts

- Nearly 1 in 2 men in Scotland over middle age will be affected by prostate disease
- Prostate cancer is the most common male cancer in Scotland
- 1 in 10 men in Scotland may develop prostate cancer
- Currently there is no routine screening for prostate cancer in the UK

For all your enquiries, get in touch:

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