

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. A recent survey 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 |

Many 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. 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 – See risk factors below.
- 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).

Risk factors for prostate cancer

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| Age | The older a man gets, especially after the age of 50, the more at risk he is of developing prostate cancer. |
| Prostate cancer in your family | Prostate cancer can run in families. A man is 2-3 times more at risk if his dad, grandad, uncle or brother has/had prostate cancer. Speak to/ask your GP about a PSA test from mid-40's onwards. |
| Breast/ovarian cancer in your family (BRCA1 or BRCA2 type) | There is a link between prostate cancer and some types of breast/ovarian cancer with the gene alteration BRCA1 and BRCA 2. If a close female blood relative is diagnosed with BRCA1/BRCA 2 breast/ovarian cancer, close male blood relatives are more at risk of developing prostate cancer. Speak to/ask for your GP about a PSA test from mid-40's onwards. |
| Background | Black men and those from an African Caribbean background are more at risk of developing prostate cancer. Speak to/ask your GP about a PSA test from mid-40's onwards. |

About the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test

PSA is made in the prostate. This test takes a small sample of blood from your arm to measure the amount of PSA. When the prostate is enlarged, inflamed or affected by prostate cancer more PSA can leak from the prostate raising the PSA level, indicating that there may be something going wrong with the prostate.

Guidance issued to GPs in December 2024 made it clear that PSA tests are not exclusively available to men aged 50 and over. You have the right to ask your GP for a PSA test. In certain circumstances, and for a small number of men, your GP may feel that having a PSA test may not be of benefit, but the GP should explain why.

Check our website and PSA leaflet for more information.

<https://www.prostatescotland.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/resources/PSA-Test-Get-The-Knowledge.pdf>

Current guidelines for GPs state "The PSA test is available to men who request it, including trans women and non-binary people."

About the digital rectal examination or DRE

This is a straightforward 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. You have the right to refuse a DRE but chat over any concerns about DRE with your GP or Urologist.



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 helps 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.
- A 12-week exercise and wellbeing programme (Prostate FFIT) run in partnership with football clubs in some areas of Scotland.
- Online exercise videos.
- 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 or contact us on 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

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

In many areas in Scotland, we can offer talks to raise awareness of prostate disease and prostate cancer through our network of volunteers, many of whom have lived experience of being diagnosed with prostate cancer. These talks can be undertaken face-to-face or can be presented online.

Some facts

- Nearly 1 in 2 men in Scotland over middle age will be affected by prostate disease (an enlarging prostate BPE).
- 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:

Prostate Scotland
89-91 Morrison Street
Edinburgh
EH3 8BU

- info@prostatescotland.org.uk
- www.prostatescotland.org.uk
- www.prostatescotland.org.uk/symptom-checker

Follow us on:

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