

[www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk)

# Know your prostate

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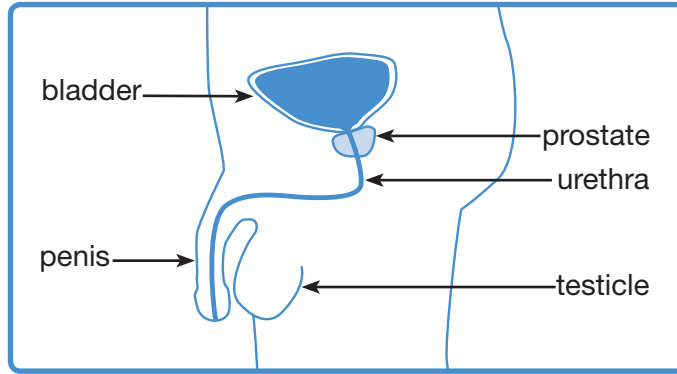
**A quick guide**

THE  
**PROSTATE**  
CANCER CHARITY



## What is the prostate gland?

Only men have a prostate gland. The prostate is usually the shape and size of a walnut. It lies underneath the bladder and surrounds the tube that men pass urine and semen through (urethra). The prostate gland's main job is to make some of the fluid that carries sperm, called semen.



## What can go wrong?

The three main types of prostate problem are:

- An enlarged prostate also called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or enlargement (BPE) – this is the most common prostate problem
- An inflammation or infection in the prostate called prostatitis
- Prostate cancer

## What changes should I look out for?

If you have problems passing urine it could be a sign of a prostate problem.

Symptoms caused by prostate problems include:

- Needing to urinate more often, especially at night – for example if you often need to go again after two hours
- Difficulty starting to pass urine
- Straining or taking a long time to finish urinating
- A weak flow of urine
- A feeling that your bladder has not emptied properly
- Needing to rush to the toilet – you may occasionally leak urine before you get there
- Dribbling urine

Less common symptoms include:

- Pain when passing urine
- Pain when ejaculating
- Problems getting or keeping an erection – this is not a common symptom of a prostate problem and is more often caused by other health conditions
- Blood in the urine or semen

**You may find it helpful to take this leaflet with you if you are going to see your GP and want to talk about your symptoms.**

Problems with passing urine are common in older men but this does not mean men should have to put up with them. There are treatments for urinary symptoms and prostate problems and there may be ways for some men to manage them for themselves.

## What is an enlarged prostate?

An enlarged prostate, also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or enlargement (BPE), is a common condition that affects many men from the age of about 50 years. It causes your prostate gland to grow in size as you get older, but it is not a form of cancer and it is treatable. In some cases if your prostate gets bigger it can cause the tube you pass urine through (urethra) to narrow and slow down the flow of urine.

## What is prostatitis?

Prostatitis can affect men of any age but is more common in men aged between 30 and 50. It can be caused by an infection or inflammation of the prostate gland. It is not a form of cancer. Prostatitis can cause a wide variety of symptoms, which differ from man to man and include those described earlier on in this leaflet.



## In the UK:

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men
- 1 in 10 men will get prostate cancer
- 250,000 men are living with prostate cancer

## What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate gland start to grow in an uncontrolled way. Most prostate cancer grows slowly to start with and may never cause any problems. But some men will have prostate cancer that is more aggressive. This needs treatment to prevent or delay it spreading outside the prostate gland.

## What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

Some men with prostate cancer may have no symptoms at all and some men may have some of the symptoms listed in this leaflet. Other possible symptoms include pain in your back, hips or pelvis that was not there before. This could be caused by general aches and pains or other conditions like arthritis. It is still a good idea to get it checked out by your GP.

## Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

Only men can get prostate cancer. Things that may affect your risk of getting prostate cancer are:

**Age:** Nine out of ten prostate cancer cases are diagnosed in men aged 60 and over.

**Ethnicity:** In the UK, men of black Caribbean or black African descent are three times more likely to develop prostate cancer than white men of the same age.

**Family:** You are two and a half times more likely to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has been diagnosed with it, compared to a man who has no relatives with prostate cancer.

**Diet:** No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer yet but diet and a healthy lifestyle may be important in protecting against the disease.

## What should I do next?

If you have some of the symptoms listed in this leaflet you may want to get further advice or a check-up at your GP surgery.

Remember, problems passing urine will often be caused by a non-cancerous prostate problem such as an enlarged prostate. If you are at higher risk of prostate cancer you may want to get more information by reading our publications, calling our Helpline or visiting your GP.

## Where can I get more information?

### Know your prostate

A guide to common prostate problems



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Read our booklet **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems**. Call our Helpline on 0800 074 8383 to order publications or speak to a specialist nurse. Or visit our website at [www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk)

You can also send your questions to our specialist nurses by using our **Helpline email contact form**. Visit [www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk) for details of how to contact the Helpline.

The Prostate Cancer Charity funds research into the causes of, and treatments for, prostate cancer. We also provide support and information to anyone concerned about prostate cancer. We rely on charitable donations to continue this work. **If you would like to make a donation, call us on 020 8222 7666.**

### The Prostate Cancer Charity

First Floor, Cambridge House,  
100 Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE  
Email: [info@prostate-cancer.org.uk](mailto:info@prostate-cancer.org.uk)  
Telephone: 020 8222 7622  
Fax: 020 8222 7639

### The Prostate Cancer Charity Scotland

Unit F22-24 Festival Business Centre,  
150 Brand Street, Glasgow G51 1DH  
Email: [scotland@prostate-cancer.org.uk](mailto:scotland@prostate-cancer.org.uk)  
Telephone: 0141 314 0050



Confidential Helpline

**0800 074 8383\***

Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm, Wed 7pm - 9pm



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