



What do you know about your prostate?

Information for
African Caribbean men

THE
PROSTATE
CANCER CHARITY

Did you know that in the UK, African Caribbean men are three times more likely to develop prostate cancer than white men of the same age?

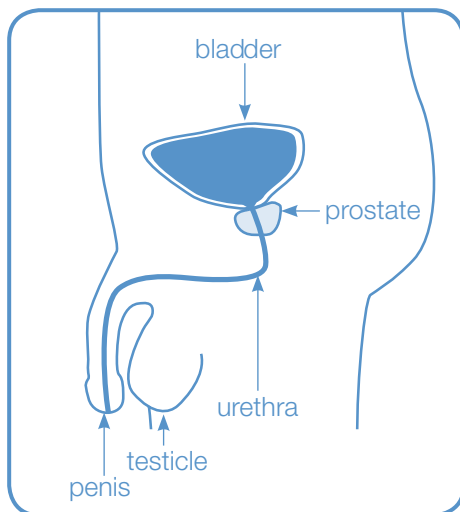
This leaflet is for African Caribbean men, their partners and families. It gives information about prostate problems, prostate cancer, risk factors and symptoms to look out for. If you are worried about prostate cancer, you can talk to your doctor (GP) or call our confidential Helpline on 0800 074 8383.

We use the term African Caribbean men throughout this leaflet. This term refers to black African and black Caribbean men.

What is the prostate gland?

Only men have a prostate gland. The prostate gland's main job is to make some of the fluid that carries sperm, called semen.

The prostate is usually the size and shape of a walnut. It lies underneath the bladder and surrounds the tube (the urethra) that men pass urine and semen through.



What can go wrong?

The main types of prostate problem are:

- An enlarged prostate - 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 any problems with your waterworks, it might be a sign of a prostate problem that may be treatable.

Symptoms to look out for include:

- Needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night. For example if you often need to go again within 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 of a prostate problem 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 tick any symptoms that apply to you and take this leaflet with you if you are going to see your GP.

You should not have to put up with problems with your waterworks even if you are an older man. There are treatments for prostate problems and there may be ways for some men to manage them for themselves.

What is an enlarged prostate?

Having an enlarged prostate is a common condition that affects many men from the age of about 50 years. It is also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or enlargement (BPE). It means your prostate gland grows 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 listed in this leaflet.

What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. Some men with prostate cancer may have some of the

symptoms listed in this leaflet and others may have no symptoms at all. 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. Some men will have prostate cancer that is more aggressive. This needs treatment to prevent or delay it spreading outside the prostate gland. There are several treatments available for prostate cancer.

Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

The things that may affect your risk of getting prostate cancer are:

- **Age:** Prostate cancer is most common in men over the age of 50 and your risk increases as you get older. It is still possible to get prostate cancer at a younger age, so if you are under 50 and you have any urinary symptoms or you are worried about your risk go and visit your GP.
- **Ethnicity:** In the UK, African Caribbean men are three times more likely to develop prostate cancer than white men of the

same age. The reasons for this increased risk are not yet clear but may be due to genetic changes passed down through generations.

- **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. There might be a higher chance of you developing prostate cancer if your relative was aged under 60 when he was diagnosed or if you have

more than one close relative with prostate cancer.

- **Diet:** No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer yet and there does not seem to be a direct link between an African Caribbean diet and prostate cancer. But in general, having a healthy diet and lifestyle may be important in protecting against the disease and other health problems.

You can read more about this in our leaflet **Diet and your risk of prostate cancer**.



What should I do next?

If you have any of the symptoms listed in this leaflet or if you are worried about prostate problems, visit your GP. You can also call our confidential Helpline on 0800 074 8383. Remember that waterworks problems are often caused by non-cancerous problems such as an enlarged prostate that can be treated.

What will happen at the GP surgery?

Your GP or practice nurse will ask you if you have symptoms and may do a few tests to find out if you have a prostate problem:

- **Urine test**

You may be asked for a urine sample to check for any infection that could be causing you problems passing urine.

- **Prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test**

PSA is a protein produced by the prostate gland. Prostate problems can cause your PSA level to rise. A PSA blood test alone cannot diagnose prostate cancer. Your GP will need to look at your PSA level together with other test results, like the DRE. You are entitled to a PSA

test as long as you have talked through the pros and cons of the test with your GP. You can read about this in our booklet **Understanding the PSA test: A guide for men concerned about prostate cancer.**

- **Digital rectal examination (DRE)**

The GP will feel the prostate for any hard or irregular areas and to feel if it is enlarged. The DRE is an important way for the GP to work out if you have a prostate problem.

For more information about these tests read our booklet, **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems.**

It is natural to feel worried or embarrassed about having tests and check-ups. But you should not let that stop you going to your GP. Remember, the tests will make sure that your GP can get the best idea about whether you have a problem that needs treating.

Personal story



Denton Wilson, diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1998

“After a long talk with my GP, he said he would give me a PSA test. So I was glad that I was persistent with him. Many people who know me, know me for all my achievements in my life, they all think I was indestructible and nothing could harm me. So when I tell them I have prostate cancer, they listen. I put their mind at ease, because I tell them what I had to go through and how I am moving forward with it. From this they want to do something and are willing to go and find out more about the PSA test.”

Where can I find out more?

Call our confidential Helpline to order our free leaflets about prostate problems and prostate cancer or to speak to a specialist nurse.



Confidential Helpline

0800 074 8383*

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

*Calls are occasionally recorded for training purposes only. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and The Prostate Cancer Charity.

The Prostate Cancer Charity

The Prostate Cancer Charity makes every effort to make sure that its services provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate cancer. We hope that these will add to the medical advice you have had and will help you to make any decisions you may face. Please contact your doctor if you are worried about any medical issues.

The Prostate Cancer Charity is dedicated to improving awareness and understanding of prostate cancer in African Caribbean communities. We work closely with community groups to set up events, deliver talks, distribute information, and carry out research to better understand the impact of prostate cancer in these communities.

The Prostate Cancer Charity

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References to sources of information used in the production of this leaflet and details of reviewers are available on our website.

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