

Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer



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This fact sheet is for men with prostate cancer who want to improve their general health. Your partner, family or friends might also find it helpful.

We describe how a healthy diet and regular physical activity may help you manage the effects of prostate cancer and its treatment. We also explain why staying a healthy weight may be very important for men with prostate cancer.

We don't recommend any set diet or exercise programme. Instead, we suggest ways to improve your overall health, including some changes that might help with your prostate cancer.

This fact sheet doesn't talk about eating problems caused by prostate cancer or its treatment. If you want information on these, ask your doctor or nurse. They may be able to refer you to a dietitian. You can also speak to our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383.

Why is a healthy lifestyle important?

A healthy lifestyle can give you more control over your health and help you to improve it. Lots of things can affect your health, including:

- body weight
- diet
- physical activity
- alcohol
- smoking.

Body weight

Staying a healthy weight can reduce your risk of many health problems, including heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. There is also strong evidence that being overweight or obese increases the risk of aggressive or advanced prostate cancer. So it may be particularly important for men with prostate cancer to stay a healthy weight.

Being a healthy weight may mean your prostate cancer is less likely to spread after surgery or radiotherapy. Hormone therapy may also be less effective if you are very overweight. Staying a healthy weight might also help you manage or reduce some of the side effects of treatments, such as urinary problems after surgery. See page 11 for more information.



How do I know if I am a healthy weight?

Your body mass index (BMI) can be a good way to check if you are a healthy weight for your height. You can use the chart below to work out if your BMI is healthy.

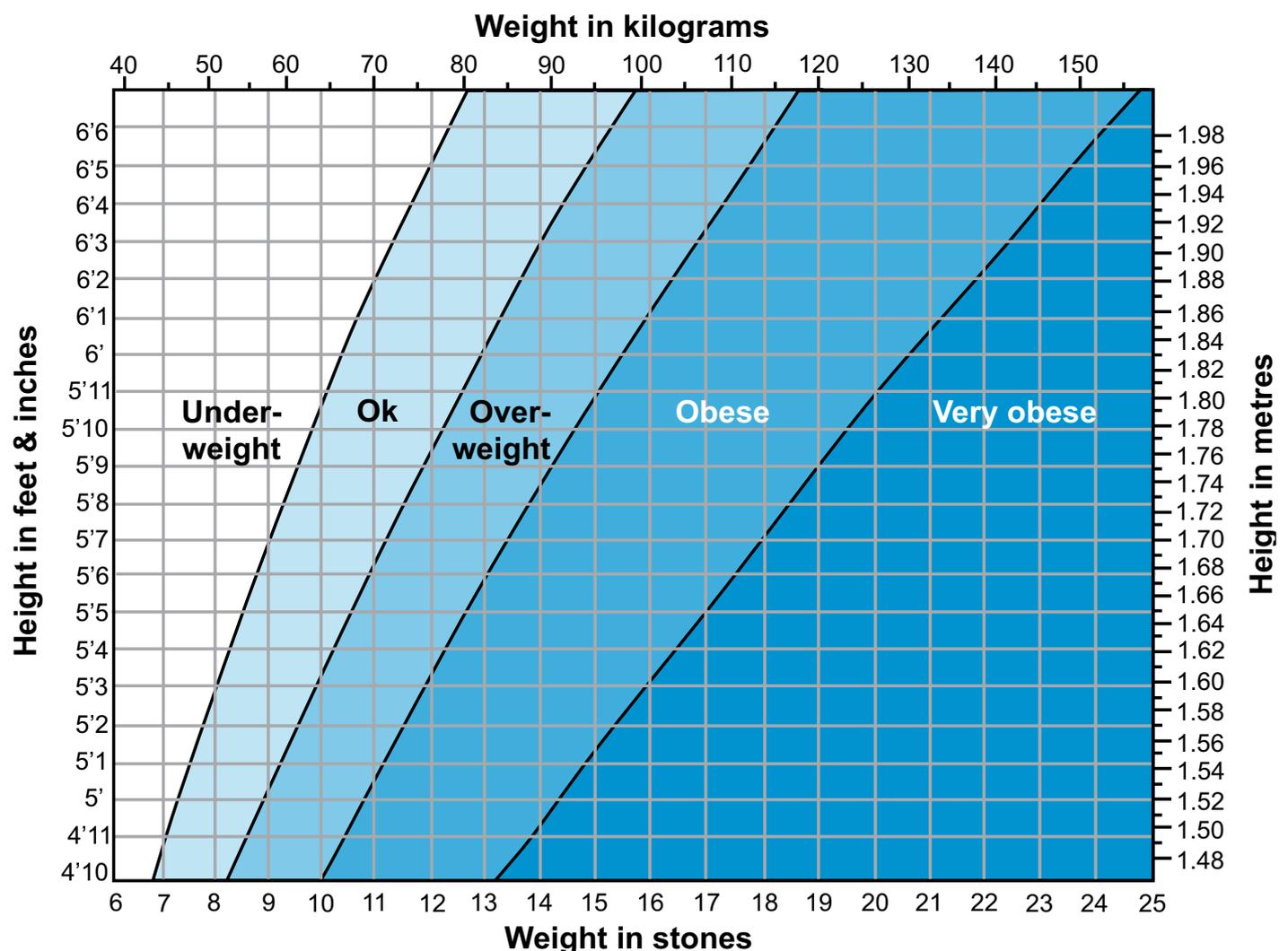
- Mark your weight in stones or kilograms and draw a line from top to bottom.
- Then mark your height in feet and inches or metres and draw a line from left to right.
- The two lines will meet in one of the shaded areas, showing whether you are a healthy weight for your height.

Another way to check if you're a healthy weight is to measure your waist size (circumference). You can work out your waist size by wrapping a tape measure around your body, half-way between the top of your hips and the bottom of your ribs.

For a man, if your waist size is more than 94cm (37 inches), you have a higher risk of health problems and you might want to try to lose some weight.

It's important to lose weight steadily by making healthy changes to your diet, and slowly increasing the amount of exercise you do. If you lose weight too quickly, your body may not get all the nutrients it needs, and you may put the weight back on again. See page 4 for more information about healthy eating, or page 10 for information on physical activity.

Being underweight can also affect your health. For example, underweight men have a higher risk of bone thinning. Some types of hormone therapy can also cause bone thinning, so men on hormone therapy may be particularly at risk of bone thinning if they are also underweight.



Talk to your doctor if you're worried about your weight. They can help you think about suitable changes to your diet or physical activity. They may be able to refer you to a dietitian. You can also get more information from other organisations (see page 15).

Diet

A healthy diet is important for general health. It can help you stay a healthy weight and can lower your risk of some health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes and some other cancers. Read more about healthy eating on page 4.

There are some foods that might be helpful for men with prostate cancer (see page 6). For example, certain foods might help reduce the chance of prostate cancer spreading to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer). Other foods may help reduce or manage some of the side effects of treatment (see page 11).

There are also some foods that you might want to eat less of, as they may be harmful for men with prostate cancer (see page 7).

Physical activity

Physical activity is any movement of the body that uses energy. It doesn't have to be a sport – it could be walking, swimming or gardening. Physical activity is important for general health and wellbeing. It can help you stay a healthy weight by using spare energy that the body would otherwise store as fat. Being a healthy weight may help to lower your risk of advanced prostate cancer (see above).

Physical activity can also help with some of the side effects of treatment (see page 11) and help you cope with feelings of anxiety or depression. Some research suggests that physical activity may help slow down the growth of prostate cancer, although other studies haven't found this. For more information about physical activity, see page 10.

Alcohol

We don't know if alcohol has any specific effect on men with prostate cancer. But we do know that drinking too much alcohol can make you put on

weight and causes health problems such as heart disease and some other cancers. The government suggests that men should not regularly drink more than three to four units of alcohol a day.

How many units of alcohol are in a drink?

- A pint of lager, beer or cider contains 2-3 units.
- A 175ml glass of wine contains about 2 units.
- A 25ml measure of 40 per cent single spirit with mixer contains 1 unit.

Your doctor or nurse can tell you whether alcohol will affect your prostate cancer treatment. If you have urinary problems after treatment, try to drink less alcohol. Alcohol can irritate the bladder and make urinary problems worse. NHS Choices has more information about managing how much you drink.

Smoking

Smoking increases the risk of health problems such as heart disease, stroke and some other cancers. It may also be harmful for men with prostate cancer. Some studies suggest that smoking may increase the chance that prostate cancer will grow and spread to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer). The more you smoke, the greater the risk. If you smoke there is also a greater chance that your prostate cancer will come back after surgery or radiotherapy. And heavy smoking may mean you're more likely to die from prostate cancer. But if you stop smoking, your risk should start to drop – and after 10 years it could be as low as men who have never smoked.

Stopping smoking can also help to reduce the side effects of treatment for prostate cancer. For example, you may be less likely to get certain urinary problems after radiotherapy if you don't smoke. Smoking also increases your risk of bone thinning. If you're having hormone therapy for your prostate cancer you're already at risk of bone thinning, but stopping smoking will help reduce your overall risk.

For information about stopping smoking, talk to your doctor or visit the NHS Choices website.

How can I eat more healthily?

Food is an important and enjoyable part of everyday life. It's important to remember this if you decide to improve your diet. You should still be able to enjoy meals, as well as occasional treats.

A healthy diet doesn't need to be boring. In fact, it's good to eat lots of different foods to make sure you get a range of nutrients. You could try some new foods to add even more variety to your meals. For example, you could set yourself a goal to try a new fruit or vegetable each week.

Set yourself realistic goals and start by making small changes that you feel comfortable with. Trying to make lots of big changes at once can be difficult, and you may find it hard to keep them going over time.

Try to cut down on unhealthy foods, such as those high in sugar or saturated fat, and those with added flavouring or preservatives. Look at the labels on packaged foods to find out their calorie (energy), fat, salt and sugar content. You can then compare products to find the healthiest ones. Remember that low-fat foods aren't always healthy – some may still be high in sugar and calories.

If you want help to improve your diet, ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian. They can help if you're making big changes to your diet, or if you have other health problems that could be affected by your diet, such as diabetes.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet and a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Eating lots of fruit and vegetables helps to reduce your risk of health problems, including heart disease and some cancers. It can also help you lose weight or stay a healthy weight.

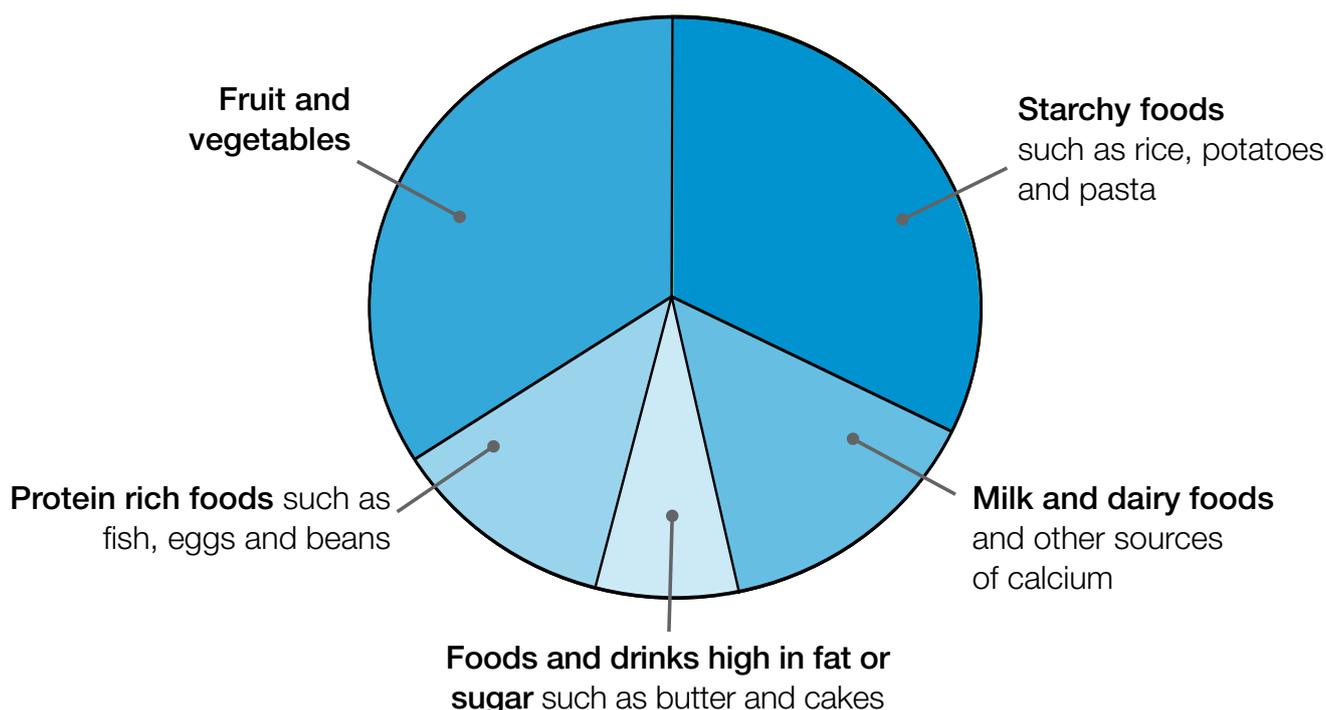
Aim to eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables each day. They can be fresh, frozen, dried or tinned with no added sugar or salt. One

serving is roughly one handful or 80g in weight. Five servings may sound like a lot, but if you try to include one or two servings in each meal, and choose fruit as snacks, this should be enough. The table below gives examples of servings.

Some fruit and vegetables might help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer (see page 6). But we need more research before we can say for certain whether men with prostate cancer should eat more of these foods. For now, try to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables of different colours each day. Fruit and vegetables of different colours (for example, red, orange, purple and green) contain different nutrients.

Type of food	Examples of single servings
Small fruit	Two plums, two satsumas, seven strawberries, seven cherry tomatoes
Medium fruit	One apple, one banana, one nectarine
Large fruit	Half a grapefruit, one slice of melon, two slices of mango
Dried fruit	One tablespoon of raisins, two figs
Green vegetables	Two broccoli spears, four heaped tablespoons of green beans
Cooked vegetables	Three heaped tablespoons of carrots, eight cauliflower florets
Salad vegetables	One bowl of mixed lettuce leaves
Pulses and beans	Three heaped tablespoons of baked beans or kidney beans
Juice	One medium glass of unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice

The five main food groups



Ten steps to eating well

- **Eat three regular meals a day.** However, if you have loss of appetite or difficulty eating, try to eat small amounts regularly instead. If you're struggling to eat because of nausea (feeling sick), try to avoid strong smelling foods. It may help if someone cooks for you.
- **Include all the food groups.** The diagram above shows the proportions you should include in your diet to get the right balance of nutrients.
- **Eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables each day.** See page 4 for more information and examples of servings.
- **Eat starchy foods at each meal.** These include potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, plantain, sweet potato and yam. Choose wholegrain and other high fibre options where possible. These give you energy and help you to feel full for longer if you are trying to lose weight.
- **Include some protein.** Protein-rich foods include fish, meat, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans and pulses.
- **Eat some dairy foods or non-dairy sources of calcium.** Choose low-fat dairy foods, such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk and reduced-fat cheese. Non-dairy sources of calcium include soy products with added calcium, green leafy vegetables, and fish where you eat the bones. See page 7.
- **Choose foods that are low in saturated fat.** See page 8.
- **Eat less sugar.** Sugary foods include cakes, biscuits, puddings and sugary drinks.
- **Cut down on salt.** Eat less than 6g of salt each day. Look out for hidden salt in processed foods, such as bread, cereals, bacon and takeaways. Avoid adding salt when you cook – try using herbs and spices to add flavour instead.
- **Drink lots of water.** Try to drink around 1.5 to 2 litres (3 to 4 pints) a day.

Can any foods help with my prostate cancer?

There is some evidence that certain foods may help slow down the growth of prostate cancer or reduce the chance of it coming back after treatment. Below, we describe some of the foods that might be helpful for men with prostate cancer. But the evidence is very limited at the moment. We need more research before we can say for certain whether any single food can help slow down the growth of prostate cancer.

Soy and other pulses

Some studies suggest that chemicals in soybeans may help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer and prevent the cancer from coming back after treatment (recurrence). But other studies haven't been able to confirm this and we still need more research into the possible benefits of soy.

If you do decide to eat more soy, you could try soy products such as soybeans, soy milk, tofu, soy yoghurts, soy bread, miso and tempeh. Try to avoid soy products with added salt and sugar.

Soybeans belong to a group of plants called pulses or legumes. Some of the chemicals in soybeans are also found in other pulses, such as kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils. We need more research to find out whether men with prostate cancer might benefit from eating more pulses. But we do know that pulses are a good source of protein and other nutrients.

Top tip

Three heaped tablespoons of cooked pulses can count as one of your five daily portions of vegetables.

Green tea

Some evidence suggests that chemicals in green tea might protect against prostate cancer growth and advanced prostate cancer. But we can't be certain about the effects of green tea, as some other studies haven't seen the same benefits.

Green tea needs to be brewed for five minutes to ensure plenty of nutrients are released, making the flavour quite strong. You might want to choose a decaffeinated variety, as caffeine can irritate the bladder. This may be particularly important if treatment for your prostate cancer has caused urinary problems.

Top tip

Try drinking decaffeinated green tea instead of your usual hot drink.

Tomatoes and lycopene

Some studies have suggested that eating tomatoes may protect against prostate cancer growth and aggressive prostate cancer. This may be because of a plant chemical in tomatoes, called lycopene. But experts recently looked at all of the studies on lycopene and only found limited evidence of any benefit for men with prostate cancer. This means we can't be certain whether lycopene is helpful for these men.

Cooked and processed tomatoes, such as tomato sauces, soups, purees and pastes, are a better source of lycopene than fresh tomatoes. This is because the body absorbs lycopene more easily from tomatoes that have been cooked or processed, particularly with a little oil. Try to choose low salt and low sugar options as some products, such as ketchup, may have added salt and sugar.

Lycopene is also found in watermelons, pink grapefruits, guava and papaya. As lycopene isn't stored inside the body for very long, it may be useful to eat foods containing lycopene regularly. You may need to avoid grapefruit if you take certain medicines, including some drugs to lower your cholesterol or blood pressure, drugs to treat erection problems, and warfarin to thin your blood. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you're unsure.

Top tip

If you want more lycopene in your diet, try cooking with a tomato-based sauce or eating tomato soup every couple of days.

Cruciferous vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, spinach and kale. Some studies suggest that cruciferous vegetables may help slow down the growth of prostate cancer and reduce the risk of advanced cancer. But other studies haven't found this, so we need more research into the effects of cruciferous vegetables.

Top tip

You might want to include cruciferous vegetables in your five daily portions of fruit and vegetables.

Pomegranate

Some research suggests that pomegranate juice may be good for men with prostate cancer. But we don't yet know if this is the case. One small study looked at the effect of pomegranate juice in men whose prostate specific antigen (PSA) levels had started to rise after surgery or radiotherapy. Drinking one glass of concentrated pomegranate juice every day led to a slower increase in the men's PSA levels. However, another small study found that pomegranate juice had no effect on PSA levels in men with advanced prostate cancer.

If you want to try pomegranate, choose a variety with no added sugar. You may need to avoid pomegranate if you use certain prescription drugs. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

Top tip

You could try drinking a glass of concentrated, unsweetened pomegranate juice each day instead of your usual fruit juice.

Are there any foods I should limit in my diet?

There is some evidence that eating a lot of certain foods may be harmful for men with prostate cancer. Below, we describe some of these foods. We don't recommend avoiding them completely, as we need more research to fully understand their effects. Until there's more evidence, you may still want to eat moderate amounts of the following foods as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Dairy foods and calcium

Calcium is important for strong bones and overall health, so you need some in your diet. Normal amounts of calcium and dairy foods – which are high in calcium – won't increase your risk of advanced prostate cancer. But we don't know enough about the effect of large amounts of calcium or dairy foods.

Some studies suggest that eating more than 2000mg of calcium per day (the amount in about 1.6 litres of milk) may increase the risk of advanced prostate cancer several years later. But other studies have found no link. We can't say for certain that there's a link between dairy foods and advanced or aggressive prostate cancer. If there is a link, it might be due to the high levels of calcium in dairy foods, or it might be caused by something else.

Non-dairy sources of calcium, such as soy milk with added calcium, are widely available in supermarkets and health food shops. Choose varieties which are low in fat and have added calcium.

Top tip

Try to eat 700mg of calcium per day (see table). This is much less than the level that might be harmful. Most people can get all the calcium they need from food without using supplements.

Dairy sources of calcium	Amount of calcium
Semi-skimmed milk (200ml portion)	245mg
Plain low fat yoghurt (150g portion)	245mg
Cheddar cheese (30g portion)	205mg
Non-dairy sources of calcium	Amount of calcium
Tinned sardines with bones (100g portion)	500mg
Tofu (100g portion)	110mg
Kale (95g portion)	145mg
Kidney beans (60g portion)	45mg
Broccoli (85g portion)	35mg

If you're on hormone therapy, you'll need extra calcium to protect your bones. This is because hormone therapy can cause bone thinning, which may increase your risk of bone fractures.

Men on hormone therapy should aim for 1200 - 1500mg of calcium each day. This is still a safe amount. If you don't think there's enough calcium in your diet, speak to your doctor or nurse about taking calcium supplements.

Meat

The effect of red and processed meat on men with prostate cancer isn't clear, but some studies suggest that eating too much may raise your risk of aggressive and advanced prostate cancer. Red meat includes beef, pork and lamb. Processed meat is meat that has been preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or with preservatives. It includes ham, bacon, sausages and burgers. Meat cooked at very high temperatures or very well done, such as barbecued, grilled or fried meat, may also increase your risk of advanced cancer, particularly if it's red meat, processed meat, or poultry with the skin left on. This may be caused by chemicals that are made when meat burns. These chemicals can damage normal cells and cause cancer.

Some studies have also suggested that a diet that is low in meat but high in fruit and vegetables helps to slow the growth of prostate cancer.

Top tip

Try to eat no more than 500g of cooked red meat (700 to 750g before cooking) a week. You could choose white meat such as skinless chicken or fish instead. Avoid processed meat and meat cooked at very high temperatures.

Fat

Some studies have suggested a link between dietary fat (the fat found in food) and prostate cancer. For example, eating lots of saturated fat might be linked with an increased risk of prostate cancer coming back after surgery, and of advanced prostate cancer. And replacing animal fats with vegetable oils may help men with prostate cancer to live for longer.

Eating too much fat can also make you put on weight, which increases your risk of aggressive or advanced prostate cancer (see page 1). But some studies have found no link between a high-fat diet and advanced prostate cancer.

There are different types of fat. Unsaturated fats are thought to be healthier. They are found in plant foods such as olive oil, vegetable oils, avocados, nuts and seeds, and in oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines. Saturated fats are less healthy. They are found in meat, cakes, biscuits, pastries, butter, and high-fat dairy products such as cheese.

You need to eat some fat for your body to function properly. But think about the type of fats you eat, and try to choose foods that contain unsaturated fats, including vegetable oils, rather than saturated fats.

The following tips can help you eat less total fat or less saturated fat.

- Choose tomato-based sauces instead of creamy ones.
- Replace fatty snacks such as crisps and biscuits with healthier options such as fruit.
- Avoid processed meat such as ham, bacon, sausages and burgers.
- Eat less red meat and remove any visible fat. Try eating chicken or fish instead.
- Remove any skin from chicken or turkey. The skin contains lots of saturated fat.
- Add less fat when you cook, and grill, bake or steam food instead of frying.
- Choose rapeseed oil for cooking and olive oil for salad dressings.
- Eat healthy fats from plant foods, such as avocados, nuts and seeds.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and yoghurt, or use soy milk, rice milk or oat milk instead of dairy products.

Top tip

Swap some of your saturated fats for olive oil, nut oils or seed oils.

Should I use dietary supplements or herbal remedies?

Some people like to use dietary supplements or herbal remedies. But there's little evidence they're helpful for men with prostate cancer, and some may even be harmful.

Dietary supplements

There's little evidence that supplements are helpful for men with prostate cancer. Some supplements may also interfere with your treatment for prostate cancer, so let your doctor or nurse know if you're taking any.

Most people should be able to get all the nutrients they need by eating a balanced diet, without taking supplements. If you do choose to take supplements, don't take more than the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for each nutrient – large doses could be bad for your health. Some men may need to take specific supplements. For example, if you're on hormone therapy, your doctor might recommend calcium and vitamin D supplements. See page 8 for more information.

Vitamin E supplements

Some research has found that vitamin E from food might help to prevent prostate cancer and protect against advanced cancer. But vitamin E supplements don't seem to lower the risk of prostate cancer and might even be harmful. You do need vitamin E in your diet as it's important for good health. But you can get enough vitamin E from foods such as vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, avocados and cereals, without taking supplements.

Selenium supplements

Selenium is an important nutrient found in Brazil nuts, fish, meat and eggs. But evidence suggests that selenium supplements don't help to prevent prostate cancer. They may even be harmful for men with prostate cancer who already get enough selenium from their diet. However, this isn't likely to be a problem for people living in the UK, as many don't get enough selenium from their diet.

‘Superfood’ supplements

Some supplements are made from foods that are high in nutrients that may be particularly good for health. These foods are known as ‘superfoods’.

A recent study looked at the effect of a supplement containing pomegranate, green tea, broccoli and turmeric in men whose prostate cancer was being monitored. It found that men who took the supplement for six months were less likely to see a rise in the level of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in their blood than men who took a dummy supplement known as a ‘placebo’. But we need more research, including larger studies lasting for several years, to find out whether the supplement actually helps slow down the growth of prostate cancer.

Herbal remedies

Some men like to take herbal medicines to help manage their prostate cancer or the side effects of treatment. For example, some men drink sage tea to help with hot flushes, which are a common side effect of hormone therapy (see page 12). But there is very little evidence that herbal remedies can help to treat prostate cancer or reduce side effects.

Not all herbal remedies in the UK are licensed, and the quality varies a lot. Be very careful when buying herbal remedies over the internet. Many are made outside the UK and may not be high-quality. Many companies make claims that are not based on proper research. There may be no real evidence that their products work, and some may even be harmful. Remember that even if a product is ‘natural’, this doesn’t mean it is safe. For more information about using herbal remedies safely, visit www.mhra.gov.uk

It’s important to tell your doctor about any complementary therapies you are using, including herbal remedies. Some herbal remedies may interfere with your cancer treatment. Some may also affect your PSA level, making the PSA test unreliable.

What type of physical activity should I do?

The type of physical activity you do isn’t really important – the main thing is to get active. If you find an activity you enjoy, and that fits into your life, you’ll be more likely to keep doing it. The following tips may help.

- Walking, swimming, cycling and gardening are all good exercise.
- You can do simple things, such as getting off the bus one stop earlier, or using stairs rather than a lift.
- You can even exercise from your chair or bed. Try lifting and stretching your arms and legs – this can help improve your movement and muscle strength.
- If you’re trying to be more active, an exercise programme such as walking 10,000 steps a day can be useful. You might not manage this at first – just do what you can, and try to walk a little further each day. For more information about walking 10,000 steps a day, visit the NHS Choices website.
- Gentle resistance exercise, such as lifting light weights or using elastic resistance bands, is particularly good if you’re on hormone therapy and are at risk of bone thinning (see page 12). If you’re on hormone therapy or have cancer that has spread to the bones, check with your doctor before doing high-impact exercises such as running and contact sports.
- Try a variety of activities or sports so that you don’t get bored, and set some goals to aim for. You may prefer to exercise with a friend or in a group.

How much physical activity should I do?

This will depend on many things, including the stage of your cancer, any treatments you are having, and your fitness levels. Even if you can’t do a lot of physical activity, a small amount can

still help. Take things at your own pace and don't do too much. Make sure you rest when you feel you need to.

Aim to be physically active at least two to three times a week. Start gently for short periods of time, such as 10 to 15 minutes, and gradually increase the amount as you become fitter. If you can, build up to include 30 minutes of moderate exercise three to five days a week.

Moderate exercise means your heart should beat faster but you should still be able to talk – about the level of a brisk walk. 30 minutes may seem like a lot, but remember you can reach this amount by being active for 10 minutes, three times a day.

It's safe for men with prostate cancer and those having treatment to be physically active. But it might be a good idea to speak to your GP, nurse or hospital doctor before you start any kind of exercise plan. This is particularly important if you have other health problems, such as heart disease or problems with your joints or muscles.

Your GP, nurse or hospital doctor can talk to you about exercising safely. You could also ask to be referred to an exercise programme or a physiotherapist for further advice.

Can I exercise after surgery?

If you're having surgery to remove your prostate, you'll need to take it easy for the first couple of weeks after your operation. After the first couple of weeks, light exercise such as a short walk each day will help improve your fitness. But try to avoid climbing lots of stairs or other heavy exercise for the first eight weeks after your surgery.

If you're having keyhole surgery, you may be able to get back to your usual activities more quickly than after open surgery. Talk to your doctor or nurse about your own situation.

Exercise safely

- Be careful to avoid falls, especially if you're on hormone therapy or your cancer has spread to the bones – both of these can increase your risk of broken bones.
- Wear clothing and trainers that fit properly, and don't exercise on uneven surfaces.
- Make sure you drink enough water.
- Don't exercise if you feel unwell, or have any pain, sickness or other unusual symptoms. Stop if you get any of these while exercising.
- If you're having radiotherapy and have any skin irritation, avoid swimming pools – chlorine can make this worse.

How can a healthy lifestyle help with side effects of treatment?

All treatments for prostate cancer can cause side effects. There are treatments available to help manage these, but diet and physical activity can also help with many side effects. Remember to speak to your doctor or nurse before starting any new exercise. They may be able to refer you to a physiotherapist who can help you plan a suitable exercise programme.

Weight gain

Some men put on weight while they are on hormone therapy, particularly around the waist. Physical activity and a healthy diet can help you stay a healthy weight. If you're finding it difficult to lose weight, ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian or weight loss programme.

Heart disease and diabetes

Hormone therapy may increase your risk of heart disease and diabetes. A healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet and regular physical activity, can help reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Bone thinning

Long-term hormone therapy can cause your bones to gradually get thinner and weaker. Severe bone thinning can lead to a condition called osteoporosis, which increases your risk of broken bones (fractures). A number of lifestyle changes may help to reduce your risk of bone thinning.

Calcium and vitamin D are important for strong bones. See page 7 for more information on calcium. You can get vitamin D from eating oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, or foods with added vitamin D. But most of your vitamin D is made inside the body when your skin is exposed to sunlight. You may need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements to help reduce your risk of bone thinning – speak to your doctor about this.

Drinking lots of alcohol can increase your risk of osteoporosis, so try not to drink more than the recommended amount (see page 3). Smoking can also increase the risk of bone thinning. For information about stopping smoking, talk to your doctor or visit the NHS Choices website.

We don't yet know whether exercise can help to prevent bone thinning in men who are on hormone therapy. But regular physical activity may help to keep you strong and prevent falls that could cause broken bones. Studies show that the following types of exercise may be particularly helpful:

- **gentle resistance exercise**, such as lifting light weights or using elastic resistance bands
- **weight-bearing exercise**, such as walking, climbing stairs, tennis and dancing.

Strength and muscle loss

Hormone therapy can cause a decrease in muscle tissue so that you feel less physically strong. Regular, gentle resistance exercise, such as lifting light weights, can help to reduce muscle loss and keep your muscles strong.

Hot flushes

Hot flushes are a common side effect of hormone therapy. Staying a healthy weight may help you manage hot flushes. Try to cut down on spicy foods, alcohol and drinks that contain caffeine, such as tea and coffee.

Some men use herbal remedies, such as sage tea or supplements containing black cohosh, to help manage their hot flushes. But there is no scientific evidence that these are effective and some, including black cohosh, may be harmful. Speak to your doctor before taking any herbal remedies.

Extreme tiredness (fatigue)

Some treatments for prostate cancer, including hormone therapy, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, can cause extreme tiredness. Light to moderate exercise, such as walking or swimming, can make you feel more awake. And doing this type of exercise along with strength training, such as lifting light weights, may be even more effective.

If your treatment is making you feel tired, you may find it difficult to be active. Try to plan activities at times when you usually have more energy. If you feel particularly tired, just do gentle exercise for a short time and take lots of breaks. You can even exercise from your chair or bed – for example, use a resistance band to help you lift and stretch your arms and legs.

You might also want to try our fatigue support service, which can help you make lifestyle changes that should improve your fatigue over time. Visit www.prostatecanceruk.org/get-support to find out more.

Anxiety and depression

Many men with prostate cancer feel anxious and worried at times. If your mood is often very low or your sleep pattern or appetite has changed a lot, this could be a sign of depression. Some treatments for prostate cancer, such as hormone therapy and chemotherapy, can also cause depression and mood swings.

Regular physical activity can often help you deal with feelings of anxiety and depression. Learning ways to relax, such as yoga or meditation, might also help.

Bowel problems

If you're having radiotherapy, you may get bowel problems during and after treatment. These might include loose and watery bowel movements (diarrhoea). Eating less fibre for a short time might help with this, although the evidence for this isn't very strong. Low fibre foods include white rice, pasta and bread, potatoes (without the skins), cornmeal, eggs and lean white meat. Make sure you drink lots of water to replace the liquid your body is losing.

If you find you're passing more wind than usual, you may want to avoid beans and pulses, cruciferous vegetables (for example, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower), fizzy drinks and beer. These foods and drinks may cause wind and bloating. Some people find that adding certain herbs or spices to their cooking, such as ginger, peppermint or dill, can help with wind.

If you've recently had surgery or get pain, you may be given pain-relieving tablets. These tablets can cause constipation (difficulty having a bowel movement). If you get constipation, try to drink lots of water – aim for about two litres (eight glasses) a day. And eat high fibre foods such as wholemeal bread and porridge, as well as fruit such as prunes. Gentle exercise may also help. If your constipation doesn't improve, speak to your doctor. They may give you a medicine called a laxative to help empty your bowels.

Urinary problems

Some treatments for prostate cancer can cause difficulty urinating (peeing). Making some changes to your lifestyle may help. Try to drink plenty of fluids – 1.5 to 2 litres (3 to 4 pints) a day. But cut down on fizzy drinks, alcohol and drinks that contain caffeine (tea, coffee and cola), as these can irritate the bladder. Try to stay a healthy weight and do regular physical activity. And avoid constipation by eating plenty of fibre.

Changes to your sex life

Hormone therapy can cause changes to your sex life, including loss of desire for sex (low libido). Regular exercise may help to increase your desire for sex, improve your self-esteem and give you more energy for sex. For information about treatments and support for erection problems or loss of desire for sex, read our booklet, **Prostate cancer and your sex life**.



For more information on side effects of treatments for prostate cancer, including ways to manage them, read our **Tool Kit** fact sheets.



If you're having hormone therapy, read our booklet, **Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer**.

Questions to ask your doctor or nurse



You may find it helpful to keep a note of any questions you have to take to your next appointment.

Are there any foods or supplements I should avoid during my treatment?

Are there any foods or supplements that might help with my side effects?

Are there any complementary therapies I should avoid with my treatment?

Are there any types of physical activity that would be particularly good for me?

Are there any types of physical activity I should avoid?

Are there any activity groups I can join?

What other support is available?

More information

British Dietetic Association

www.bda.uk.com

Information about a healthy diet and how to find a registered dietitian.

British Nutrition Foundation

www.nutrition.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7557 7930

Information on a healthy diet and how diet may be linked to cancer.

Macmillan Cancer Support

www.macmillan.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 808 00 00

Practical, financial and emotional support for people with cancer, their family and friends. Includes information on diet, recipes and exercise.

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

www.mhra.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 3080 6000

Provides advice about how to use herbal remedies safely. Also runs the Yellow Card Scheme, a system for reporting unusual side effects from any treatment, including herbal remedies.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/livewell

Information and advice, including information about how to eat healthily and exercise.

Penny Brohn Cancer Care

www.pennybrohncancercare.org

Helpline: 0845 123 23 10

Supports people living with cancer through lifestyle information and self-management tools.

World Cancer Research Fund

www.wcrf-uk.org

Telephone: 020 7343 4205

Funds research and provides information on diet and exercise to reduce the risk of cancer.

About us

Prostate Cancer UK fights to help more men survive prostate cancer and enjoy a better life.

This fact sheet is part of the Tool Kit. You can order more Tool Kit fact sheets, including an



A to Z of medical words, which explains some of the words and phrases used in this fact sheet.

Download and order our fact sheets and booklets from our website at prostatecanceruk.org/publications or call us on **0800 074 8383**.

At Prostate Cancer UK, we take great care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate cancer. We hope these will add to the medical advice you have had and help you to make decisions. Our services are not intended to replace advice from your doctor.

References to sources of information used in the production of this fact sheet are available at prostatecanceruk.org

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- Prostate Cancer UK Specialist Nurses



Speak to our Specialist Nurses

0800 074 8383*

prostatecanceruk.org

Donate today – help others like you

Did you find this information useful? Would you like to help others in your situation access the facts they need? Every year, 40,000 men face a prostate cancer diagnosis. Thanks to our generous supporters, we offer information free to all who need it. If you would like to help us continue this service, please consider making a donation. Your gift could fund the following services:

- £10 could buy a Tool Kit – a set of fact sheets, tailored to the needs of each man with vital information on diagnosis, treatment and lifestyle.
- £25 could give a man diagnosed with a prostate problem unlimited time to talk over treatment options with one of our Specialist Nurses.

To make a donation of any amount, please call us on **0800 082 1616**, visit **prostatecanceruk.org/donate** or text **PROSTATE to 70004***.

There are many other ways to support us. For more details please visit **prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved**

*You can donate up to £10 via SMS and we will receive 100% of your donation. Texts are charged at your standard rate. For full terms and conditions and more information, please visit prostatecanceruk.org/terms



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t Follow us on Twitter: **@ProstateUK**

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Call our Specialist Nurses from Mon to Fri 9am - 6pm, Wed 10am - 8pm

*Calls are recorded for training purposes only.

Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

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