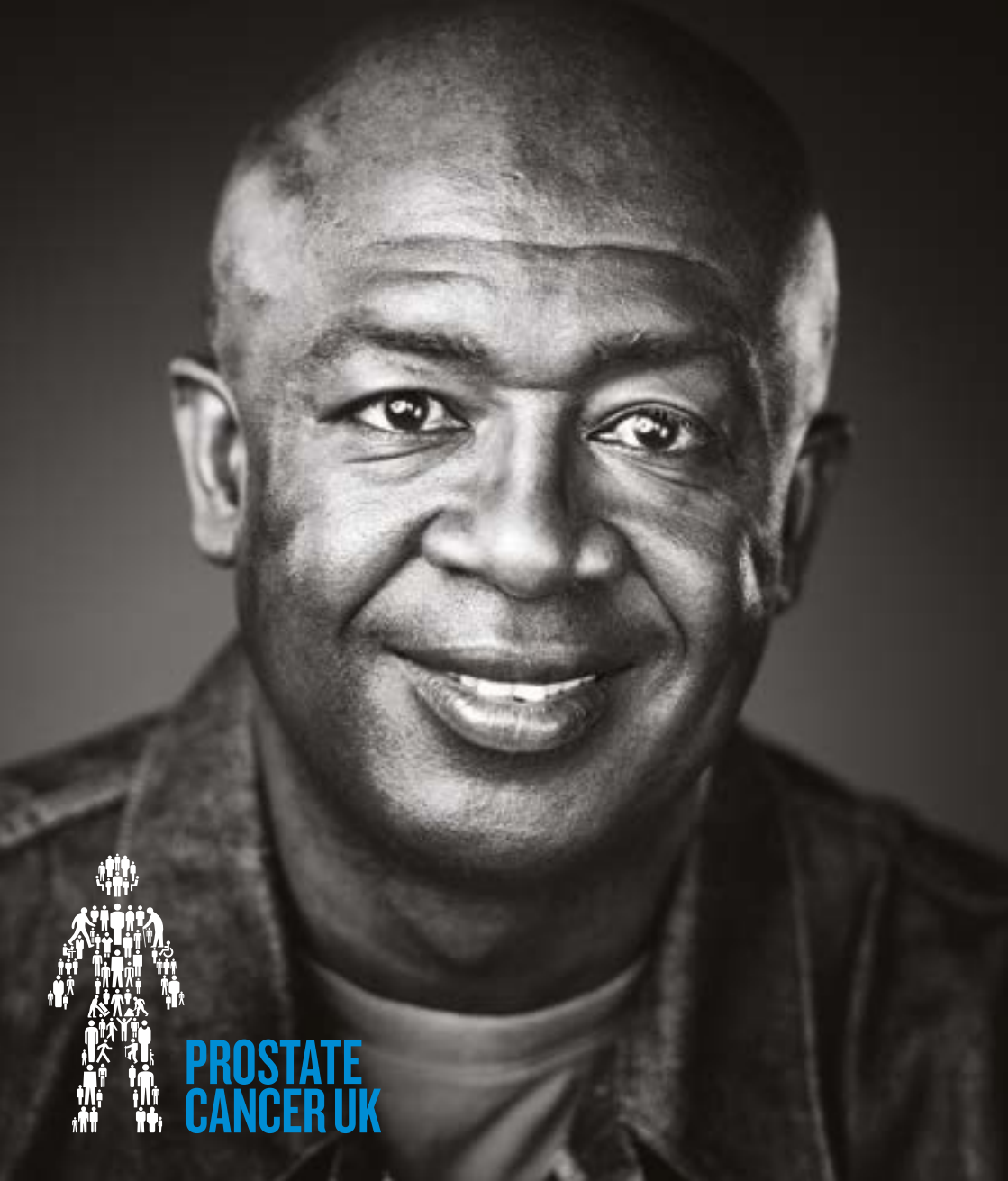


Prostate cancer and other prostate problems


Information for black men



**PROSTATE
CANCER UK**

This leaflet is for black men, including black African and black Caribbean men. Your partner, family or friends might also find it helpful. We've made this leaflet because 1 in 4 black men in the UK will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

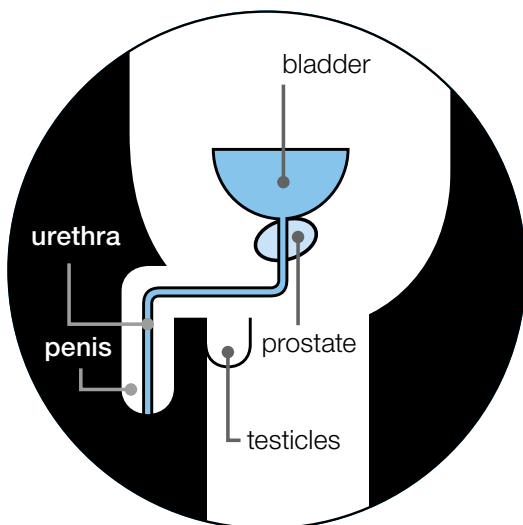
We explain what the prostate is and describe the three most common prostate problems – prostate cancer, an enlarged prostate and prostatitis. We also explain what changes to look out for, what to do if you think you have a prostate problem and what might happen at the GP surgery.

 If you're worried about prostate cancer or other prostate problems, talk to your GP. You can also call our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.

What is the prostate?

Only men have a prostate. The prostate is usually the size and shape of a walnut and grows bigger as you get older. It sits underneath the bladder and surrounds the urethra, which is the tube men urinate (pee) and ejaculate through.

The prostate's main job is to help make semen – the fluid that carries sperm.



What can go wrong?

The most common prostate problems are:

- an enlarged prostate – see page 8
- prostatitis – see page 10
- prostate cancer – see below.

An enlarged prostate and prostatitis are **not** cancer. But you can have an enlarged prostate or prostatitis and prostate cancer at the same time. We explain more about all of these problems in the following pages.

Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way.

Some prostate cancer grows too slowly to cause any problems or affect how long you live. Because of this, some men can have their prostate cancer monitored rather than treated. But some prostate cancer grows quickly and has a high risk of spreading. This is more likely to cause problems and needs treatment to stop it spreading. There are several ways to treat prostate cancer.

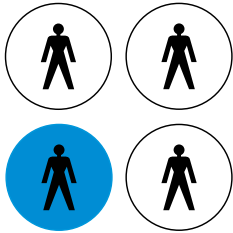
Can I prevent prostate cancer?

No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer. But staying a healthy weight – for example by eating healthily and keeping active – may be important. If you're overweight, you might have a higher risk of being diagnosed with prostate cancer that's aggressive (more likely to spread) or advanced (cancer that has spread outside the prostate). Read more in our leaflet,



Diet, physical activity and your risk of prostate cancer.

As a black man, what is my risk of prostate cancer?

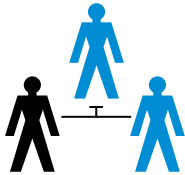


1 in 4 black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives*. Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other men, who have a 1 in 8 chance of getting prostate cancer. We don't know why, but it might be linked to genes.

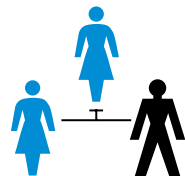
You may also be more likely to get prostate cancer if:

45+

You are aged 45 or over –
and your risk increases as you get older.



Your father or brother has had it –
particularly if they were under 60
when diagnosed.



**Your mother or sister has
had breast cancer.**

*The 1 in 4 lifetime risk was worked out using information about men recorded as 'black African', 'black Caribbean' and 'black other'. If you have mixed black ethnicity, you're probably at higher risk of prostate cancer than a white man. But we don't have enough information on prostate cancer in men with mixed black ethnicity to know your exact risk. And we don't know whether it makes a difference if it's your mother or father who is black.



**It's not easy for men to
talk about their health,
especially in my community.**

A personal experience

Does prostate cancer have any symptoms?

Most men with early prostate cancer don't have any symptoms.

One reason for this is the way that early prostate cancer grows. You'll usually only get symptoms if the cancer grows near the tube you urinate through (the urethra) and presses against it, changing the way you urinate. But because prostate cancer usually starts to grow in a different part of the prostate, early prostate cancer doesn't often press on the urethra and cause symptoms.

If you do notice changes in the way you urinate this is more likely to be a sign of an enlarged prostate (see page 8), or another health problem. But it's still a good idea to get it checked out. Possible changes include:

- difficulty starting to urinate or emptying your bladder
- a weak flow when you urinate
- a feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly
- dribbling urine after you finish urinating
- needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night
- a sudden need to urinate – sometimes leaking urine before you get to the toilet.

If prostate cancer breaks out of the prostate (locally advanced prostate cancer) or spreads to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer), it can cause other symptoms, including:

- pain in the back, hips or pelvis
- problems getting or keeping an erection
- blood in the urine or semen
- unexplained weight loss.

All these symptoms are usually caused by other things that aren't prostate cancer. But it's still a good idea to get any symptoms checked out by your GP so they can find out what's causing them and make sure you get the right treatment, if you need it.

- You might find it helpful to tick any problems you have and take this booklet with you to your GP or nurse.

A personal story

Godfrey was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 47

"I had no symptoms at all, but I went to my doctor for advice and he said that because I'm black and my dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer, I was more at risk."

Enlarged prostate

An enlarged prostate is an increase in the size of the prostate. It is **not** cancer. You might also hear it called benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

An enlarged prostate is very common in men over 50. Having an enlarged prostate doesn't increase your risk of getting prostate cancer. But it's possible to have an enlarged prostate and prostate cancer at the same time.

What are the symptoms?

Not all men with an enlarged prostate get symptoms. But as the prostate grows, it can press on the outside of the urethra, causing the urethra to become narrow. This can cause urinary problems.

Possible symptoms of an enlarged prostate include:

- a weak flow when you urinate
- a feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly
- difficulty starting to urinate
- dribbling urine after you finish urinating
- needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night
- a sudden need to urinate – sometimes leaking urine before you get to a toilet.

These symptoms can also be caused by other things, such as cold weather, anxiety, other health problems, your lifestyle, and some medicines. If you have any symptoms, visit your GP to find out what may be causing them.

Blood in your urine is rarely a symptom of an enlarged prostate and is usually caused by something else. Tell your doctor if you have blood in your urine.



Find out more in our booklet, **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

A personal story

Ron was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate at 54

“I began to have urinary problems, so visited my GP. I was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate and began taking medicines to help my urine flow. My quality of life improved in all areas.”

Prostatitis

Prostatitis is the name given to a set of symptoms thought to be caused by an infection or inflammation (swelling) of the prostate. It is **not** cancer. Prostatitis is common. It can affect men of any age, but is most common in men aged between 36 and 50.

What are the symptoms?

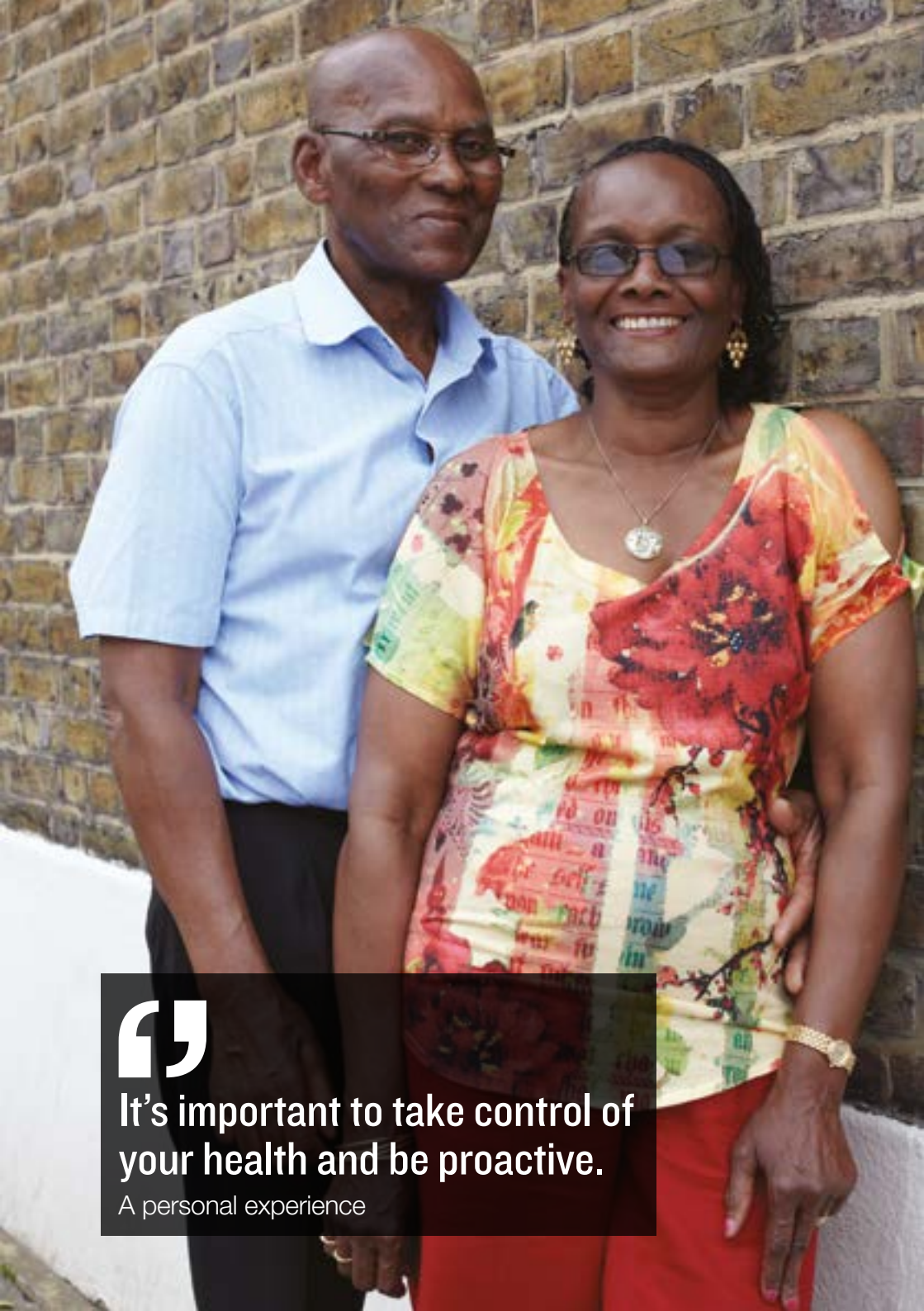
Prostatitis can cause a wide range of symptoms that can be different from man to man. Symptoms can include:

- aching in your testicles, the area between your testicles and back passage (perineum), or in the tip of your penis
- pain in your lower abdomen (stomach area), groin or back
- needing to urinate (pee) more often or urgently, especially at night
- pain or stinging during or after urinating
- feeling as if you are sitting on something like a golf ball
- no desire for sex (lack of libido)
- difficulty getting or keeping an erection (erectile dysfunction), pain or burning during and after ejaculation, and premature ejaculation – although these are less common.

In rare cases there can be blood in the semen. This can also be a sign that there is something else wrong, so always speak to your doctor if you have this symptom. Also in rare cases, prostatitis can be severe – it can cause a high temperature and sweating. If this happens, you may need treatment in hospital.



Find out more in our booklet, **Prostatitis: A guide to infection and inflammation of the prostate.**



**It's important to take control of
your health and be proactive.**

A personal experience

What should I do next?

If you're a black man over 45, speak to your GP about your risk of prostate cancer, even if you don't have any symptoms. Remember to tell them if anyone in your family has had prostate cancer or breast cancer.



If you notice any of the symptoms we talk about in this leaflet at any age, visit your GP. You can also call our Specialist Nurses or chat to them online.

What if I'm not registered with a GP?

You could ask family or friends who live near you which GP surgery they go to. Or you can find one near you on the following websites:

- www.nhs.uk in England
- www.nhsinform.scot in Scotland
- www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk in Wales
- www.hscni.net in Northern Ireland.

You can also call NHS 111 to get non-emergency medical help if you don't have a GP.

What if I don't have time to see a GP?

It's important to make time to see the GP if you're worried about your health. Some GP surgeries are now open in the evenings or weekends, so you should be able to see the GP or nurse at a time that is right for you. You can also ask for a phone appointment at some GP surgeries. Or you can call NHS 111 if you need medical help but it isn't an emergency.

What will happen at the GP surgery?

If you're worried about your risk of prostate cancer or any symptoms you are having, your GP will listen to your concerns and talk to you about them. If you aren't sure how to explain your symptoms or concerns to your GP, there's a form on page 17 for you to fill in and show to your GP.

There are a few tests that your GP can do to find out if you have a prostate problem. There are advantages and disadvantages to having tests. Your GP will tell you more about these to help you decide whether to have tests.

Urine test

If you have symptoms, your GP might ask you for a urine sample to check for blood or an infection that could be causing your symptoms.

PSA test

This is a blood test that measures the amount of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in your blood. PSA is a protein produced by normal cells in the prostate and also by prostate cancer cells. Your PSA level rises as you get older and your prostate gets bigger. A raised PSA level may suggest you have a problem with your prostate. A PSA test alone can't usually tell you what the problem is. But it can help your GP decide whether you need further tests.

Your right to a PSA test

There is no screening programme for prostate cancer in the UK. This means that you won't be invited to have a PSA test as part of a normal check up. But you can ask your doctor if you want to have a PSA test.

Even if you don't have any symptoms, you have the right to a PSA test if you're over 50 and you've talked through the advantages and disadvantages with your GP or practice nurse.

If you're under 50, you don't have the right to a PSA test. But because black men are at higher risk of prostate cancer and may get prostate cancer at a younger age than men of other ethnicities, you might be able to have a PSA test if you're over 45 and have discussed the advantages and disadvantages with your GP or practice nurse.



Read more in our booklet, **Understanding the PSA test: A guide for men concerned about prostate cancer.**

Digital rectal examination (DRE)

This is where your doctor feels your prostate through the wall of your back passage (rectum). They'll gently slide a finger into your back passage. They'll wear gloves and put some gel on their finger to make it more comfortable.

Your prostate may feel:

- **normal** – a normal size for your age with a smooth surface
- **larger than expected for your age** – this could be a sign of an enlarged prostate
- **hard and lumpy** – this could be a sign of prostate cancer.

You may find the DRE slightly uncomfortable or embarrassing, but the test isn't usually painful and it takes less than a minute. It can help your doctor find out whether you might have a prostate problem.

A personal story

Ally was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 59

“When I had the DRE I thought – for a few seconds of discomfort I can live with it. It's something that I always say to guys – yeah, it is uncomfortable but if it could save your life, you can deal with it. Don't die of embarrassment.”

Worried about going to the GP?

Some men feel worried or embarrassed about going to the doctor or having tests. But don't let that stop you going to your GP. They can help you find out whether you have a problem and what might help. It is your choice whether to have tests. You can also ask to see a male doctor or a female doctor when you make the appointment.

If you're not sure what to say to your GP, there's a form on page 17 for you to fill in and show to them. You can also talk things through with our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.



Where can I find out more?



To find out more about your risk and having tests, read our booklet, **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems**, or visit **prostatecanceruk.org**. We also have a range of other leaflets and booklets about prostate problems.

To order publications:

All our publications are free and available to order or download online. To order them:

- call us on 0800 074 8383
- visit our website at **prostatecanceruk.org/publications**

Call our Specialist Nurses



You can also speak to our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383. Or you can text NURSE to 70004 to ask for a call back, or email or chat to them online at **prostatecanceruk.org/get-support**

About us

Prostate Cancer UK has a simple ambition: to stop men dying from prostate cancer – by driving improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and support.

We take care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate diseases. 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 leaflet and details of reviewers are available on our website. The photos in this leaflet are of people affected by prostate problems. The quotes with the photos are not always the words of the people who appear.

Take this to your GP

1 in 4 black men in the UK will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives. If you're worried about your risk or have any symptoms, it may help to fill out this form and show it to your GP.

What are you worried about (please tick)?



- prostate cancer
- an enlarged prostate
- prostatitis
- I'm not sure

How old are you?

Black men over 45 have a higher risk of prostate cancer. And your risk increases as you get older.

Have any of your relatives had prostate cancer or breast cancer?

Yes, my

No

I don't know

If your father or brother has had prostate cancer, you may be at higher risk of prostate cancer. Your risk may also be higher if your mother or sister has had breast cancer.

Have you noticed any of the symptoms or changes we talk about in this booklet?

No, but I'm still worried about my risk of prostate cancer

Yes. My symptoms are:

Questions you could ask your GP or practice nurse

Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

What tests do you suggest and why?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a PSA test?

How soon will I get the results?

If I have a PSA test and my PSA level isn't raised, will I need more tests in the future?

If I have a PSA test and my PSA level is raised, what will happen?



**I found it very helpful to call the
Specialist Nurses at Prostate Cancer UK.**

A personal experience



**Speak to our
Specialist Nurses**

0800 074 8383*

prostatecanceruk.org



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t Follow us on Twitter: @ProstateUK

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To be reviewed June 2020

**Call our Specialist Nurses from Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm,
Wednesday 10am - 8pm**

* Calls are recorded for training purposes only.

Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

Prostate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Registered company number 02653887.

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