

# Know your prostate

## A quick guide

### What is the prostate?

The prostate is a gland. It 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 that carries urine (wee) out of the body. The prostate's main job is to help make semen – the fluid that carries sperm.

### Who has a prostate?

The following people have a prostate:

- men
- trans women\*
- non-binary people who were assigned male at birth\*\*
- some intersex people.\*\*\*

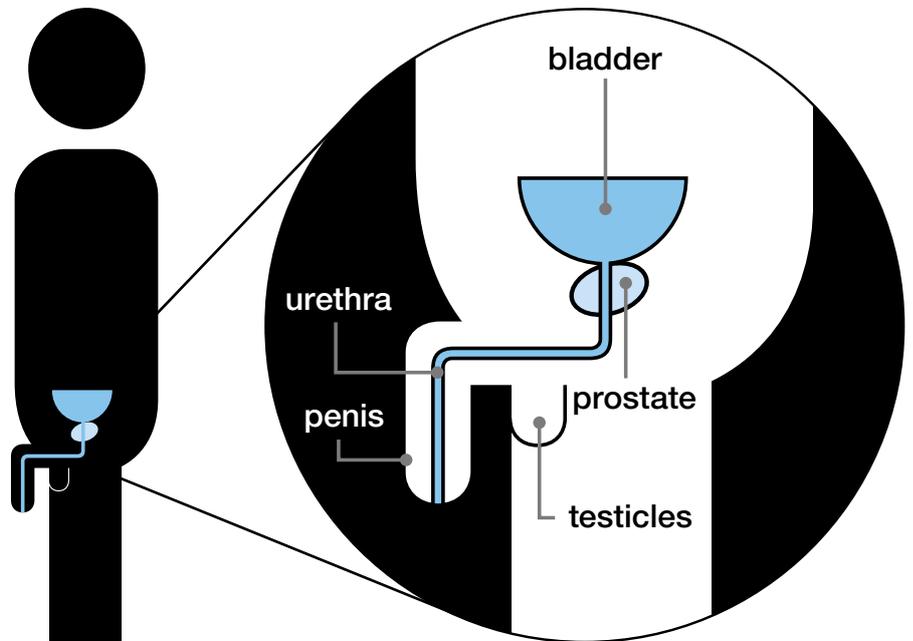
### What can go wrong?

The most common prostate problems are:

- an enlarged prostate
- prostatitis
- prostate cancer.

### What is an enlarged prostate?

An enlarged prostate is an increase in the size of the prostate. It isn't caused by 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. As the prostate grows, it can cause urinary problems, including the symptoms listed on page 3. There are ways to treat it.



### What is prostatitis?

Prostatitis is thought to be caused by an infection or by inflammation of the prostate. It is not cancer. It is common and can affect men of any age, but it's most common in men aged between 30 and 50. Symptoms vary from man to man but can include urinary problems, aching in the area between your testicles and back passage, or pain in the lower part of your abdomen (stomach area), groin or lower back.

#### Trans, non-binary or intersex?

The information in this leaflet has been developed based on guidance and evidence in men. If you are a trans woman, male-assigned non-binary or intersex, some of this information is still relevant to you – but your experience may be slightly different. For more information visit [prostatecanceruk.org/trans-women](https://prostatecanceruk.org/trans-women)

\* A trans woman is someone who was assigned male at birth but identifies as a woman. Trans women can develop prostate problems, even if they have taken hormones. The prostate is not removed during genital reconstructive surgery.

\*\* A non-binary person may not identify as a man or a woman.

\*\*\* An intersex person may have both male and female sexual characteristics and so might have a prostate.

## What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way. Prostate cancer is very common – 1 in 8 men in the UK will get it in their lifetime. Prostate cancer often grows too slowly to cause any problems. But some prostate cancers grow more quickly and are more likely to spread. This is more likely to cause problems and needs treatment to stop or delay it spreading.

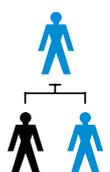
## Does prostate cancer have any symptoms?

Most men with early prostate cancer don't have any symptoms. That's why it's important to know about your risk (see below). However, some men may have difficulty urinating. Men with prostate cancer that's spread to other parts of the body might have pain in the back, hips or pelvis, problems getting or keeping an erection, blood in the urine or semen, or unexplained weight loss. These symptoms are usually caused by other things, but it's still a good idea to get them checked out by your GP.

## Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

You may be more likely to get prostate cancer if:

 **50** you are aged 50 or over – it mainly affects men over 50, and your risk increases as you get older, or

 **your father or brother has had it** – you are two and a half times more likely to get it if your father or brother has had it, or

  **you are black** – 1 in 4 black men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime.

**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 (spread outside the prostate).

## What should I do next?

If you notice any of the changes we talk about in this leaflet or if you think you might be at risk of prostate cancer, visit your GP so they can give you more information or tests if necessary.

You can also call our Specialist Nurses or chat to them online. They can help with any questions about prostate problems, even if you haven't yet spoken to your GP. Our Specialist Nurses are also there for you if you are a partner of someone who has symptoms of a possible prostate problem or might be at risk of prostate cancer. Remember, urinary problems will often be caused by something other than cancer, and there are treatments that can help.

## Where can I get more information?

Read our free booklet, **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems.**

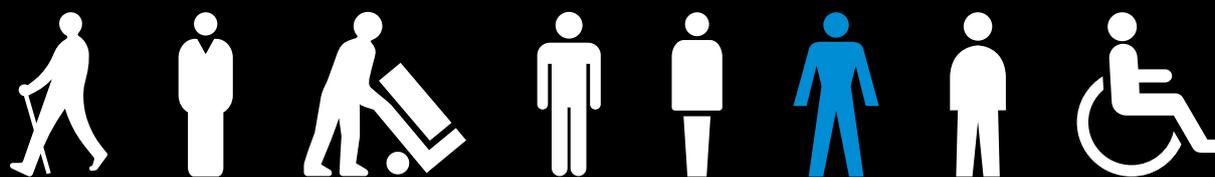
To order or download it:

- call us on **0800 074 8383**
- visit [prostatecanceruk.org/publications](http://prostatecanceruk.org/publications)

You can also text **NURSE** to **70004** or you can email or chat online with our nurses on our website at [prostatecanceruk.org/get-support](http://prostatecanceruk.org/get-support)

 **Speak to our Specialist Nurses**  
**0800 074 8383\***  
[prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)

\*Call our Specialist Nurses from Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, Wednesday 10am - 5pm. Calls are recorded for training purposes only. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.



**1 in 8 men in the UK will get prostate cancer**

## What changes should I look out for?

If you notice any changes when you urinate or have any of the problems below, this could be a sign of a prostate problem.

Changes to look out for include:

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

Less common changes include:

- pain when urinating
- pain when ejaculating.

A small number of men get blood in their urine or semen, or problems getting or keeping an erection. These symptoms aren't usually caused by a prostate problem, and are more often linked to other health problems.

Urinary problems are common in older men, but this doesn't mean you have to put up with them. There are ways to treat them or manage them yourself.

**Talk to your GP if you have any of the problems above. You might find it helpful to tick any problems you have and show this leaflet to your GP.**

Help us continue providing free information by making a donation of any amount:  
[prostatecanceruk.org/donate](https://prostatecanceruk.org/donate)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**



**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**

**prostatecanceruk.org**  
**info@prostatecanceruk.org**  
**020 3310 7000**