

**What do you know  
about your prostate?**  
Information for Black men



**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**

## Did you know that in the UK, about 1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives?

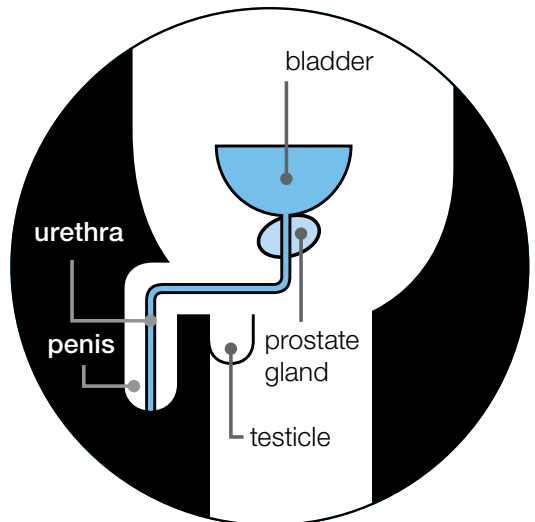
This leaflet is for Black men of any age who want to know about prostate problems. It is also for their partners, friends and families. The leaflet gives information about prostate problems, prostate cancer, who is at risk and symptoms to look out for. If you are worried about prostate problems or cancer, you can talk to your doctor (GP) or call our Specialist Nurses on our confidential helpline on 0800 074 8383.



## What is the prostate?

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

The prostate is a gland. Its job is to make some of the fluid that carries sperm, called semen.



## What can go wrong?

The three most common prostate problems are:

- an enlarged prostate – this is the most common prostate problem
- an inflammation or infection in the prostate, called prostatitis
- prostate cancer.

Having an enlarged prostate or prostatitis is not the same as having cancer. But you can have an enlarged prostate or prostatitis and prostate cancer at the same time. Enlarged prostate and prostate cancer are most common in men over 50, prostatitis is most common in men aged 30 to 50.

## What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate gland start to grow in an uncontrolled way. Some men with prostate cancer may have no symptoms. Other men may have some of the symptoms listed on page 7. 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. There are several treatments available for prostate cancer.

## Am I at risk of prostate cancer?

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

**Age:** Prostate cancer mainly affects men over the age of 50 and your risk increases with age. It is still possible to get prostate cancer at a younger age, so if you are under 50 and you are worried about your risk go and see your GP.

**Ethnicity:** Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than men of other ethnic backgrounds. In the UK, about 1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives. The reasons are not yet clear but it could be because of 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 under 60 when he was diagnosed, or if you have more than one close relative with prostate cancer.

**Lifestyle:** No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer, but in general, having a healthy diet and lifestyle might be important in protecting against the disease.



Read more in our leaflet, **Diet, activity and your risk of prostate cancer.**

## A personal story

### **Denton was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 42**

“I had no symptoms at all when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I had recently lost my father to the disease and that spurred me on to visit the doctor, as I knew the family connection meant I was more likely to develop the disease. I received treatment and have been living with prostate cancer for the last twelve years. My father’s death gave me life and now I use my time to raise awareness. It’s not always easy for men to talk about their health, especially in my community, so I give talks and hold information stands to get the message out there.”



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

Denton Wilson

## Other prostate problems

### What is an enlarged prostate?

It's not a form of cancer. The prostate gland gets bigger as you get older, and an enlarged prostate is common for men after the age of about 50. For some men, an enlarged prostate causes the tube you pee through (urethra) to narrow and this slows down the flow of urine. If you have an enlarged prostate it can be treated by making some changes to your lifestyle, medicines or surgery.

### What is prostatitis?

It's not a form of cancer. Prostatitis can be caused by an infection or inflammation of the prostate gland. It affects men of any age but it's more common between 30 and 50. Prostatitis can cause a wide variety of symptoms and they vary from man to man. They include some of the symptoms described on the next page.

## A personal story

### **Ron, 74, diagnosed with an enlarged prostate in 1993**

“I began to experience difficulty passing urine, so went to visit my GP. He carried out a digital rectal examination [DRE], an uncomfortable experience but it was over quickly. After some more tests I was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate. I began taking medication to help my urine flow. In 2002 the difficulties increased, I had more tests and there was no sign of cancer, but I was put on a course of medication and had treatment to remove part of my prostate gland. Now, my quality of life has improved in all areas.”

## What changes should I look out for?

If you have problems peeing, get things checked out even if it's just to put your mind at rest – dealing with the problem early is a good idea. It could be a sign of a prostate problem that might be treatable.

Symptoms to look out for include:

- needing to pee more often, especially at night - for example if you often need to go again within two hours
- difficulty starting to urinate
- straining, or taking a long time to finish
- a weak flow when you pee
- a feeling that your bladder has not emptied properly
- needing to rush to the toilet – you may occasionally leak before you get there
- dribbling urine.

Less common symptoms of a prostate problem include:

- pain when peeing
- pain when ejaculating
- problems getting or keeping an erection
- blood in your pee or semen.

You may find it helpful to tick any symptoms you've got and take this leaflet with you if you go to see your GP.

Problems with peeing are common in older men, but this doesn't mean you have to put up with them. There are ways to treat them.

If you have any of the symptoms above – think about visiting your GP. You can also talk to a Specialist Nurse by calling our confidential helpline.



## What should I do next?

If you are worried about prostate cancer or other prostate problems or have any of the symptoms listed here, visit your GP. You can also call our Specialist Nurses on our confidential helpline. Remember that problems with peeing are often not caused by cancer but another problem such as an enlarged prostate.



## What will happen at the GP surgery?

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

**Urine test:** They might ask for a urine sample to check for any infection that could be causing you problems peeing.

**PSA test:** The PSA test is a blood test. It measures the amount of PSA (prostate specific antigen) in your blood. PSA is a protein produced by cells in the prostate gland. Your PSA level rises as you get older. Prostate problems such as an enlarged prostate and prostatitis, as well as prostate cancer, can cause your PSA level to rise. A PSA test alone cannot tell you whether you have 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 if you are over 50 and have talked it through with your GP. Read more in our booklet, **Understanding the PSA test: A guide for men concerned about prostate cancer.**







**Speak to your spouse or partner  
and consult your GP. Never fail to  
exercise your rights, be inquisitive.**

*A personal experience*

**Digital rectal examination (DRE):** The doctor or nurse will feel the prostate through the back passage (rectum) for any hard or irregular areas and to check if it is enlarged. The DRE is an important way for the doctor or nurse to help assess your prostate. Men who have had the DRE say that it's not that bad and doesn't take long. It makes sure your doctor gets the best idea about whether you have a problem that needs treating.

## A personal story

### **Ally, 62, diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2010**

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



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

## Where can I find out more?



Speak to our Specialist Nurses on our confidential helpline. They can also send you our free leaflets about prostate problems or cancer. Read more and get in touch with other men online at **prostatecanceruk.org**

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## Other useful organisations

### Association for Prostate Awareness (APA)

**[www.prostate-awareness.co.uk](http://www.prostate-awareness.co.uk)**

A voluntary association aimed at raising awareness of prostate cancer and offering support to men in the community, their families and carers. APA is based in East London and works with the African and African Caribbean community.

### Cancer Black Care

**[www.cancerblackcare.org.uk](http://www.cancerblackcare.org.uk)**

**Phone 020 8961 4151**

Information and support for all people affected by cancer. Raises awareness of cancer in black and minority ethnic communities.

## About Prostate Cancer UK

Prostate Cancer UK fights to help more men survive prostate cancer and deal with other prostate diseases so they can enjoy a better life. We support men by providing vital information and services. We find answers by funding research into causes and treatments and we lead change, raising the profile of all prostate diseases and improving care. We believe that men deserve better.

At Prostate Cancer UK, 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 can be found on our website.

The photos in this booklet are of people personally affected by prostate cancer. The quotes with the photos are not always the words of the people who appear.



**Speak to our  
Specialist Nurses**

**0800 074 8383\***

**prostatecanceruk.org**



## **Men United v Prostate Cancer** **We can win this**

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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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