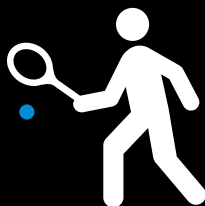


# Diet, physical activity and your risk of prostate cancer



**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**

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The following symbols appear throughout the leaflet to guide you to sources of further information:



Our Specialist Nurses



Our publications

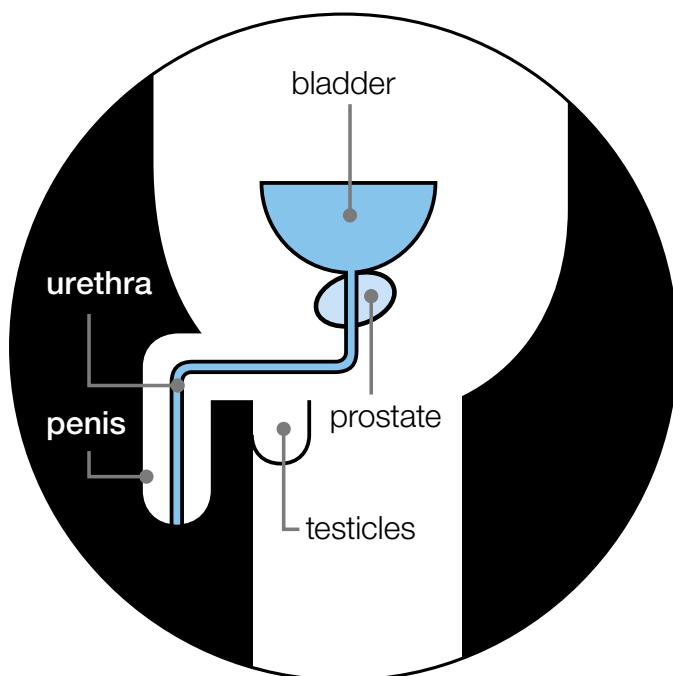


Sections for you to fill in

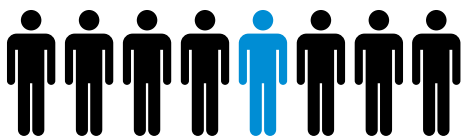
This leaflet is for anyone who wants to find out about living a healthy lifestyle and whether it can affect your risk of prostate cancer. A healthy diet and regular exercise are important for staying a healthy weight, and this may help lower your risk of getting aggressive prostate cancer.

## What is 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. But some prostate cancer grows quickly and is more likely to spread – this is called as aggressive prostate cancer. This is more likely to cause problems and need treatment to stop it spreading. Prostate cancer that has spread outside of the prostate to other parts of the body is called advanced prostate cancer.



## What is my risk of prostate cancer?

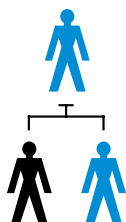


**1 in 8** – in the UK, about one in eight men will be diagnosed in their lifetime. But for some men the risk is higher.

## What can increase my risk?



**Your age** – it mainly affects men over 50 and your risk increases with age.



**Your family history and genes** – you are two and a half times more likely to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has had it. Your risk is also higher if your mother or sister has had breast cancer.



**Your ethnicity** – In the UK, about 1 in 4 Black men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime. Your risk may increase once you're over 45.

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If you're **overweight**, you might have a higher risk of being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer.

## Does prostate cancer have any symptoms?

Most men with early prostate cancer (cancer that's contained inside the prostate) don't have any signs or symptoms. That's why it's important to know about your risk (see page 4). But, some men might have some urinary problems, such as difficulty starting to urinate or a weak flow. These can be mild and happen over many years.

If you do notice changes, they're more likely to be caused by something else, other than prostate cancer. But it's still a good idea to get it checked out.



If you're worried about your risk or have any symptoms, visit your GP or speak to our Specialist Nurses. You can call our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.



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

## Can I reduce my risk of prostate cancer?

No one knows how to prevent prostate cancer, but staying a healthy weight may be important (see page 6). There is strong evidence that being overweight increases the risk of being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. It may also increase the risk of aggressive prostate cancer.

We don't know for sure, but being physically active might also help to lower your risk. Keeping active and eating a healthy diet can help you stay a healthy weight, and can improve your health in other ways too. Read more about diet on page 8 and getting active on page 15.

You can't change your age, ethnicity or family history, but you can take control of your lifestyle. If you would like help making changes, ask your GP or practice nurse if there are any local healthy lifestyle services.

## **What is a healthy weight?**

Being a healthy weight could lower your risk of advanced prostate cancer. It can also improve your general wellbeing and help prevent other health problems such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease and some other cancers. There are different ways of measuring whether you are a healthy weight. These include body mass index (BMI) and waist size.

### **Finding out your BMI**

Your BMI can tell you whether your weight is healthy. It is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in meters squared.

For most adults, a healthy BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. A higher BMI means you're likely to be overweight, and at higher risk of some health conditions. BMI is not suitable for everyone, for example, if you're very muscular. This is because it can't tell the difference between fat and muscle.

The threshold for a healthy BMI may also change depending on your ethnicity. For example, a lower BMI is recommended for Black African, African-Caribbean, South Asian and Chinese ethnic groups.

### **Measuring your waist size**

Another way to check if you're a healthy weight is to measure the size of your waist. Carrying fat around your stomach can raise your risk of some illnesses.

To measure your waist, wrap a tape measure around your stomach, half-way between the top of your hips and the bottom of your ribs. Breathe out naturally.

For a man, if your waist size is 94cm (37 inches) or more, you have a higher risk of health problems. This may include aggressive or advanced prostate cancer. As with BMI, the threshold may be lower depending on your ethnicity.

Find a BMI calculator and read more about BMI and waist size at **[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)**

## What is a healthy diet?

A balanced diet should contain all the food groups shown in the Eatwell Guide on page 10. This will ensure your body has all the energy and nutrients it needs while only eating small amounts of foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what you eat and drink overall should come from each food group for a healthy balanced diet.

The Eatwell Guide is suitable for most people. If you have specific dietary requirements or health problems, speak to your doctor or a dietitian.

## Tips for healthy eating

- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Try to eat fruits and vegetables of different colours. A portion is about 80g or a handful.
- Base meals on starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, plantain and sweet potato, choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives, such as soya drinks, and choose lower fat and sugar options.
- Eat some protein, such as beans, pulses, fish, eggs and lean meat or meat alternatives such as tofu or Quorn™.
- Eat less red meat. Try eating chicken or fish instead. Ideally, include two 140g portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily.
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat these in small amounts.
- Drink six to eight glasses (250 ml each) of fluid a day.
- Only have small amounts of foods and drinks that are high in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar, such as butter, cakes and crisps.
- Limit caffeine and sugary drinks. Choose lower salt, fat and sugar foods and drinks options where possible.



Find more information on healthy eating, examples of portion sizes and recipes from:

- NHS website (**[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**, then search for the Eatwell Guide)
- British Dietetic Association (**[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)**)
- World Cancer Research Fund (**[www.wcrf-uk.org](http://www.wcrf-uk.org)**)



## Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	<b>3.0g</b>	<b>1.3g</b>	<b>34g</b>	<b>0.9g</b>
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

**Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars**

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance shows how much of what you eat overall should

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day



**Eat less often and in small amounts**

**Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other foods**  
Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of fish per week, one of which is oily fish, and red and processed meat

# Guide

of healthier and more sustainable food. It  
d come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

## Can any foods lower my risk of prostate cancer?

You may have heard that certain foods might lower your risk, including, soya foods, oily fish and foods containing:

- lycopene – a chemical found in tomatoes and tomato product
- selenium – a mineral found in foods such as Brazil nuts, fish, seafood, liver and kidney
- vitamin E – such as nuts, seeds, wholegrains, green leafy vegetables and avocados.

But the evidence that these help is not clear and limited. Until there's more evidence that any individual food can reduce the risk of prostate cancer, it's best to have a balanced diet that contains all of the food groups shown on page 10.

## Which foods might increase my risk of prostate cancer?

It's not known for certain whether any foods increase the risk of prostate cancer. But some might increase your risk if you eat a lot of them.

### Dairy foods

Eating or drinking lots of dairy products, such as milk, yoghurt and cheese, might increase your risk. This could be because they contain calcium. But researchers are also looking into other causes.

It's still important to eat some dairy foods every day to keep your bones healthy. Dairy alternatives with added calcium, such as soya yoghurt and soya milk, also count. Choose lower-fat and lower-sugar options when you can.

## Calcium

Having too much calcium in your diet might increase your risk of prostate cancer. But you need about 700mg of calcium a day to help keep your bones healthy. You can get this from a balanced diet. For example, a 200ml glass of milk contains between 240-260mg of calcium and a 120g low fat yoghurt contains about 180mg. You can also get calcium from dairy alternatives, fish, bread, and some vegetables.

## Red and processed meat

Eating red and processed meat increases your risk of some types of cancer. It is not clear if this includes prostate cancer.

Red meat includes beef, pork, lamb and goat. Processed meat includes sausages, bacon, ham, salami, and other cured or preserved meats. You should try limit the amount of red and processed meat you eat. Try to cut down to no more than 70g per day.

## Alcohol

Drinking alcohol increases the risk of some types of cancer. It's not known if this includes prostate cancer.

For your overall health, limit the amount of alcohol you drink to 14 units a week. This is about six pints of average-strength beer or ten small glasses (125ml) of low-strength wine. Try to spread these out throughout the week and have some alcohol-free days.

For more information about alcohol units and how to cut back on the amount of alcohol you drink, visit **[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)**

### Other foods

Some other foods, such as saturated fats, and certain ways of cooking meat, such as cooking it well done or burning it, might increase your risk of prostate cancer.

Check **[prostatecanceruk.org](https://prostatecanceruk.org)** for updates on new research.

## Can I take supplements to lower my risk?

Some people take supplements to try to lower their risk of cancer, but studies suggest this isn't likely to work. In fact, some supplements may even be harmful. The best way to get all the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients your body needs is to eat a healthy, balanced diet, including plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Speak to your doctor before taking any supplements and don't take more than the recommended daily allowance.

## Can physical activity reduce my risk of prostate cancer?

Regular physical activity is good for your general health and wellbeing. It can help you to stay a healthy weight and help prevent health problems such as heart disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes and some cancers.

We don't yet know whether physical activity can help prevent prostate cancer. But some studies suggest it may help to lower your risk, particularly of aggressive prostate cancer and advanced prostate cancer.

## How much physical activity should I do?

- Any type of exercise is good for you, the main thing is to get active. Aim to be physically active every day.
- Aim to do at least 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of moderate intensity exercise every week. This could be 30 minutes five times a week, and could include brisk walking, cycling or even gardening – anything that gets your heart rate up.
- If you are new to exercise or starting after a break, start gently for short periods of time, such as 10 to 15 minutes, and slowly build up.
- If you're already active, you could do at least 75 minutes a week of vigorous intensity activity instead, such as running or swimming.
- Try to do some activities that strengthen all the major muscle groups. Such as using resistance bands or machines, carrying heavy shopping, or heavy gardening.

Speak to your doctor before starting any new exercise, especially if you have health problems such as heart or lung disease or joint problems.

## Tips to help you get active

- Find a sport or activity you enjoy, or do lots of different ones so you don't get bored. Anything that gets you moving.
- You might find it more fun to exercise with other people. Ask a friend to come with you or join a sports team or running group.
- If you often drive or take the bus for short journeys, try taking a brisk walk instead.
- Try to spend less time sitting down. When possible, break it up with an activity. You could move about the house while you watch TV. And don't forget to stand up regularly if you sit down to work.
- If you are not able to stand, chair or bed exercises still count.
- You might find it helpful to write down everything you do in an activity diary so you can see how well you're doing. Ask your practice nurse about exercise or health and wellbeing services near you.

## What about smoking?

Smoking increases the risk of health problems such as heart disease, stroke and some cancers. It is not clear whether smoking affects your risk of developing prostate cancer, but there is strong evidence that smoking is linked to aggressive prostate cancer. 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.

You're more likely to quit for good if you use a stop smoking service. Your GP can support you and can tell you about stop smoking services in your area. The **[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)** also has lots of information to help you.



## Where can I find out more?

You can read more on our website. We have a range of other leaflets and booklets about prostate cancer and other prostate problems. All our publications are free and available to order or download online at **[prostatecanceruk.org/publications](http://prostatecanceruk.org/publications)** or by telephone on 0800 074 8383.



If you are concerned about prostate cancer or other prostate problems, speak to your GP or call our Specialist Nurses on 0800 074 8383.



## Notes



## Other useful organisations

### **The Association of UK Dietitians**

**[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)**

**Telephone: 0121 200 8080**

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

### **British Heart Foundation**

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

**Telephone: 0300 330 3311**

Information about heart disease and eating for a healthy heart.

### **British Nutrition Foundation**

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

**Telephone: 020 7557 7930**

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

### **NHS website**

**[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)**

Information, tips and tools to help you make healthy lifestyle choices about conditions, treatments and lifestyle.

### **World Cancer Research Fund**

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

**Telephone: 020 7343 4200**

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

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



**Speak to our  
Specialist Nurses**

**0800 074 8383\***

**prostatecanceruk.org**

**Trusted  
Information  
Creator**



*Patient Information Forum*

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

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To be reviewed October 2025

**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.

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