

# Living with Prostate Cancer

## A Quick Guide

### Contents

This is a brief summary on 'Living with prostate cancer' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Coping with prostate cancer
- Sex and prostate cancer
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- Questions for your doctor
- Prostate cancer organisations

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

### Coping with prostate cancer

It can be very difficult to cope with a diagnosis of cancer, both practically and emotionally. You may feel very upset and confused at first. All sorts of different feelings may come and go. As well as coping with the fear and anxiety that a diagnosis of cancer brings, you have to work out how to manage practically. Who do you tell you have cancer? There may be children or grandchildren to consider.

Our coping with cancer section contains lots of information you may find helpful including information about who can help, counselling, financial issues and much more.

### Sex and prostate cancer

Treatment for prostate cancer can cause a variety of side effects. Any of these can affect your sex life, some more than others. Some men worry that they may pass the cancer to their partner but this is not true. Cancer is not infectious and can't be passed on to a sexual partner.

Some men get diarrhoea during radiotherapy and for some time afterwards. This can be unpleasant and tiring and may put you off wanting to have sex. It will gradually go back to normal after a few weeks though.

You may feel too tired to want sex for some time after prostate cancer treatment. There is information about coping with tiredness in the coping physically section.

Radiotherapy, surgery and hormone treatment can lead to difficulty getting an erection (impotence). Erection difficulties can be temporary or permanent and can be very difficult to come to terms with. There are medicines that can help to give you an erection. There are also other ways of getting an erection if the medicines don't work. Your doctor can prescribe medicines. If you talk to your doctor or specialist nurse, they can refer you to a specialist counsellor or sex therapist.

### **Urinary problems after prostate cancer**

You may have urinary problems before and after prostate cancer treatment. These include urine leakage and difficulty passing urine.

#### **Urine leakage**

Unfortunately, after either surgery or radiotherapy, many men find that they have some urine leakage for a short time. This covers a range of situations, from occasional dribbling or leaking of urine to complete loss of bladder control.

If urine leakage becomes a long term problem, discuss this with your doctor or nurse. They can help or can refer you to a specialist incontinence clinic. Staff there can help you with muscle exercises, bladder training and medicines. There are many ways of managing urine leakage. Community continence advisers can also visit you at home. You can also get helpful information from the Bladder and Bowel Foundation [www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org).

#### **Difficulty passing urine**

Some men have difficulty passing urine. This can be due to narrowing of the tube that takes urine from the bladder to outside the body. This problem is called a urethral stricture. In an extreme case, you may not be able to pass urine at all. You can have treatment for this. The narrow area is stretched under anaesthetic during a short operation. Up to 1 in 12 men (8%) need this operation some years after radiotherapy to the prostate gland.

### **What to ask your doctor about living with prostate cancer**

- When can I expect to be able to get back to normal after my treatment?
- When will I be able to go back to work, take up my old hobbies and activities again?
- Can I get help in dealing with my feelings?
- Will I need to pay for counselling?
- What practical help is available?
- What help can you offer in managing my symptoms?
- Who can help me to manage bladder or bowel problems?
- Is there anyone who I can talk to about erection problems?
- How long will radiotherapy side effects last?
- Is there anyone who can give me advice on money matters, including claiming benefits?
- How should I talk to my family and children about the cancer?

## Prostate cancer organisations

### Cancer Research UK

Website: [www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help)  
Cancer Information Nurses phone: 020 7061 8355

### Prostate Cancer UK

Website: [www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org)  
Email: [info@prostatecanceruk.org](mailto:info@prostatecanceruk.org)  
Helpline: 0800 074 8383

### Prostate Cancer Support Federation

Helpline: 0845 601 0766  
Website: <http://www.prostatecancerfederation.org.uk/>  
Email: [helpline@prostatecancerfederation.org.uk](mailto:helpline@prostatecancerfederation.org.uk)

### Bladder & Bowel Foundation

Helpline: 0845 345 0165  
Website: [www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)  
Email: [info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org](mailto:info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org)

### Sexual Advice Association

Helpline: 020 7486 7262  
Email: [info@sexualadviceassociation.co.uk](mailto:info@sexualadviceassociation.co.uk)  
Website: <http://sexualdysfunctionassociation.com/>

**For more information**, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/cancerhelp>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on 0808 800 4040 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday.

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in March 2014. CancerHelp UK is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through CancerHelp UK and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. Copyright Cancer Research UK 2014. Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and in the Isle of Man (1103)