

Prostate cancer - symptoms and treatment

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Prostate cancer usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs for many years. It's important to be aware of the risk factors and symptoms, so you can get it checked out quickly.

Who is at risk?

The causes of prostate cancer are largely unknown. However, certain things can increase your risk of developing the condition:

Age - the chances of developing prostate cancer increase as we get older. Most cases develop in men aged 50 or older.

Ethnicity - for reasons not yet understood, prostate cancer is more common in men of African-Caribbean or African descent, and less common in Asian men.

Family history - men whose father or brother have been affected by prostate cancer under the age of 70, or where there is a family history, are at a slightly increased risk themselves of developing the condition.

Weight - recent research also suggests that obesity increases the risk of prostate cancer.

Symptoms of prostate cancer

Symptoms don't usually appear until the prostate is large enough to affect the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the penis (urethra). When this happens, an individual may notice things like:

- An increased need to urinate
- Straining while urinating
- A feeling that the bladder hasn't fully emptied
- Pain when urinating (this is rare)
- Blood in the urine (this is rare)

These symptoms shouldn't be ignored, but it doesn't mean the individual has prostate cancer. It's more likely they're caused by something else, such as prostate cancer enlargement which is a common non-cancerous problem.

Treatment

The 3 risk groups system:

Some doctors use an older system that divides prostate cancer into 3 risk groups:

- Low risk prostate cancer (CPG 1)
- Medium risk prostate cancer (CPG 2 and CPG 3)
- High risk prostate cancer (CPG 4 and CPG 5)

Treatment for CPG 1

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy)

Treatment for CPG 2

- Active surveillance
- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy on its own or with hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with or without external radiotherapy and hormone therapy

Treatment for CPG 3

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy and hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with external radiotherapy and hormone therapy

Treatment for CPG 4 and CPG 5

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy with hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with external radiotherapy and hormone therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone therapy

Support

A cancer diagnosis, and even the prospect of one, can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for an individual and their loved ones. Therefore, take comfort in knowing PHC have dedicated cancer nurses available, via the phone, to provide support from day one.

PHC'S CANCER SERVICES

When you decide it's the right time for you to take the next steps, we're here for you. We offer a range of cancer support services that may be available to you as part of your healthcare cover with PHC. Find out more about what these services entail and how to access them.

Prostate cancer self-referral service

A cancer diagnosis, or even just the prospect of one, can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for you and your loved ones, but you can take comfort in knowing we have expert support available to you. If you've spotted any changes and are worried it may be cancer, we'll make sure you receive the tests you need, quickly. You won't even need to get a GP referral first*; all you need to do is call us.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** or email claims@thephc.co.uk.

Dedicated nurse service

If you're diagnosed with cancer we can put you in touch with our Dedicated nurse service, to answer any questions you have.

Access genuine help, support and understanding from friendly, qualified nurses.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** (9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm, Saturday) and a member of the team will put you in touch with a nurse on diagnosis. Outside these hours our experienced nurses provide support via our 24/7 health support line.

Check4Cancer

We work closely with our provider, Check4Cancer, to make sure you're seen quickly if you suspect cancer. They're experts in their field and have years of experience providing clinical advice and treatment.

Our in-house healthcare professionals also have extensive knowledge, insight and experience in helping members who are facing cancer. They'll be there to support you and your family from diagnosis, and throughout treatment. If required, contact our team, who will seek to pre-authorise your treatment in line with your available benefits.

