

How many units are in a drink?

- A pint of 4% lager contains 2.3 units
- A 175ml glass of 13% wine contains 2.3 units
- A 25ml measure of 40% single spirit with mixer contains 1 unit

If you have urinary problems after treatment for prostate cancer, try to cut down on alcohol as it can irritate the bladder and make the problems worse. Your specialist team can tell you whether alcohol will affect your prostate cancer treatment.

Food supplements

You should be able to get all the nutrients you need by eating a balanced diet rather than taking supplements. High doses of some supplements may be harmful. Supplements may also interfere with some treatments for prostate cancer, so let your specialist know if you are taking, or plan to take, any supplements.

Your doctor may recommend specific supplements in particular cases. For example they may advise you to take calcium supplements if you are on hormone therapy which can cause bone thinning. Calcium can help keep your bones strong. See page 7 for more information.

Herbal remedies

Some men like to take herbal or complementary medicines, such as sage tea, to help them manage their prostate cancer or improve the side effects of treatment. However, there is very little evidence that herbal remedies are effective for prostate cancer.

Not all herbal remedies in the UK are licensed, and the quality varies greatly. Be particularly careful about buying herbal remedies over the internet. Many are manufactured outside the UK and may not be regulated. Many companies make claims that are not based on proper research, and there may be no real evidence that they work. Some may even contain harmful substances such as heavy metals. Remember that a product is not necessarily safe because it is called 'natural'.

There is a risk that herbal remedies could interfere with your prostate cancer treatment. Some herbal remedies contain small amounts of substances similar to hormones which may artificially reduce your PSA levels, making PSA tests unreliable.

It is very important that you tell your doctor if you are taking any kind of herbal or complementary therapy.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) provides advice about how to use herbal remedies safely. Their contact details are on page 11.

Reporting unusual side effects: The Yellow Card Scheme

If you think you are experiencing a side effect from a herbal remedy that is not mentioned in the information leaflet that comes with it, then you can report it using the Yellow Card Scheme. This is run by the MHRA. They will investigate and if they find a problem with a medication then the MHRA will take action to protect the public.

There are three ways you can report a side effect:

- Use the online Yellow Card form at www.yellowcard.gov.uk
- Ask your pharmacist for a Yellow Card form
- Call the Yellow Card freephone on **0808 100 3352**

Exercise

Exercise is important for general health. It can help you to maintain a healthy weight by burning up extra energy which would otherwise be stored by the body as fat. It is unclear whether exercise can help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer, but it may help with some of the side effects of treatment (see page 4). It can also help you cope with any feelings of anxiety or depression.

There is more information about how to include exercise in your everyday routine on page 9.

Being underweight can also affect your health, so it is important that you eat enough. Underweight men who are on hormone therapy have a higher risk of bone thinning. If you are losing weight without meaning to or are struggling to eat enough, you can ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian.

How can diet and exercise help with side effects?

Diet and exercise may help to reduce the side effects of some prostate cancer treatments. For more information on these side effects, please read our other **Tool Kit** fact sheets.

Weight gain

If you are on hormone therapy, you may find that you put on weight, particularly around the waist. You may also be at increased risk of heart disease and diabetes. A healthy diet and regular exercise can help you stay a healthy weight and reduce your risk of these complications. If you find it difficult to lose weight ask to be referred to a dietitian for advice.

Bone thinning

Long term treatment with LHRH agonists such as Zoladex and Prostag, which are a type of hormone therapy, can increase your risk of bone thinning (osteoporosis). Regular exercise may help to keep you strong and prevent falls which could lead to bone fractures. Gentle resistance exercise, which includes fast walking, swimming and exercising with small weights, can be particularly helpful. You may also need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements.

You should speak to your specialist before you start any exercise or take supplements to reduce the risk of bone thinning. They may be able to refer you to a physiotherapist who will be able to give advice and suggest a specific exercise programme for your needs.

Strength and muscle loss

Hormone therapy can reduce the amount of muscle tissue in the body, resulting in

a decrease in physical strength. Gentle resistance exercise such as walking and swimming can help to reduce this muscle loss and keep you stronger.

Hot flushes

Some men have found that the herbal remedies sage tea and black cohosh help them to cope with hot flushes caused by hormone therapy. However, there is no scientific evidence that these are effective. There is also evidence to suggest that black cohosh may cause liver damage. This is rare but you should not take it if you have ever had liver or kidney disease. Tell your doctor if you are taking any herbal remedies for hot flushes or other side effects.

Tiredness

Tiredness and fatigue can be a side effect of some treatments including hormone therapy, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Gentle exercise such as walking or swimming can help to reduce tiredness. Choose an exercise that is appropriate to your level of fitness, pace yourself and take regular rests.

Anxiety and depression

Many men with prostate cancer will feel anxious and worried at some point following diagnosis, during and after treatment. For some, these feelings may develop into depression. Some treatments for prostate cancer, including hormone therapy and chemotherapy, can also cause depression and mood swings. Regular exercise can help you cope with any feelings of anxiety and depression.

Some men may find the side effects of treatment such as weight gain and loss of muscle and physical strength changes how they feel about their body. Eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise can help you feel more in control and improve the way you feel about your body.

Bowel problems

If you are having radiotherapy, you may have problems with loose and watery stools (diarrhoea) during and after treatment. You may find that eating a low fibre diet for a short time helps with this. Low fibre foods

this is slightly above the recommended daily amount, there is no evidence that this amount of calcium will affect the spread of your cancer.

You can get calcium from a wide variety of both dairy and non-dairy foods. The following table below gives examples of foods that are sources of calcium.

| Dairy sources of calcium | Amount of calcium |
|---|-------------------|
| Semi-skimmed milk (200ml portion) | 250mg |
| Cheddar cheese (40g portion) | 300mg |
| Plain low fat yoghurt (150g portion) | 245mg |
| Choose low-fat versions of these foods where possible. Non-dairy alternatives, such as soya milk, are widely available in supermarkets and health food shops. | |
| Non-dairy sources of calcium | Amount of calcium |
| Tinned sardines (100g portion) | 500mg |
| Kale (95g portion) | 145mg |
| Broccoli (85g portion) | 35mg |
| Kidney beans (60g portion) | 45mg |
| Tofu (100g portion) | 275mg |

Vitamin D

Vitamin D, along with calcium, helps to keep your bones strong. If you are on hormone therapy, aim to get 400-800IU (10-20 micrograms) of vitamin D each day. You can get vitamin D from exposure to sunlight although many people in the UK do not get enough vitamin D in this way. You can also get it from eating oily fish and foods fortified with vitamin D.

Meat

Some studies have found that eating too much red meat such as beef, pork or lamb

may increase the risk of advanced prostate cancer. Other studies have suggested that a plant-based diet helps to slow the growth of prostate cancer. However, the evidence about red meat is uncertain, and other studies have found no link with prostate cancer.

Processed meat, such as ham, bacon, sausages and burgers, may increase the risk of prostate cancer growing. Some research also suggests that meat cooked at very high temperatures or very well done can increase your risk of advanced prostate cancer. When meat is burnt it may produce chemicals which can damage normal cells and cause cancer.

Try to eat no more than 300g cooked red meat (400-450g raw) a week, and try not eat red meat every day. You could choose lean white meat such as chicken or fish instead. If you do eat poultry such as chicken or turkey, remove the skin as some studies have suggested that eating the skin can increase the risk of prostate cancer growing.

Fat

You need some fat for your body to function properly. However, too much fat in your diet can lead to being overweight or obese, which may increase your risk of advanced prostate cancer (see page 3). Obesity may also increase your risk of other health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. Reducing the fat in your diet can help to reduce your risk of obesity.

There are different types of fat. Unsaturated fats (known as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) are healthier, and are found in nuts, oily fish, vegetable oil and olive oil. Saturated fats are less healthy and are found in meat and meat products, dairy products such as butter and cheese, and processed foods such as cakes, biscuits and pastries.

We cannot say for certain whether reducing the amount of fat you eat will affect your prostate cancer. Some studies have shown a link between saturated fats found in red meat and dairy products and an increased risk of advanced prostate cancer. However, other studies have found that eating large amounts of fat does not affect prostate cancer.

What foods may help my prostate cancer?

The table below summarises the information in this fact sheet. It suggests some foods that you may wish to eat more of or add to your diet.

| What should I eat more of? | How do they help? | How do I include them in my diet? |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Fruit and vegetables | Some of the nutrients found in fruit and vegetables may help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer. Reduces your risk of other health problems. | Eat at least five portions each day. Try to include all the different colours in your weekly diet. |
| Lycopene | It may help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer. | Lycopene is found in tomatoes (particularly cooked and processed tomatoes), and in lower levels in watermelon, pink grapefruit, guava and papaya. |
| Pomegranate juice | It may help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer. | Try drinking a glass of pomegranate juice a day. |
| Cruciferous vegetables | They may help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer and reduce the risk of aggressive cancer. | Eat more vegetables from the cabbage family, such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy and kale. |
| Soy and pulses | They may contain anti-cancerous molecules. Soy contains particularly high levels of these molecules. | Include more soy, beans, peas and lentils in your diet. Choose traditional forms of soy such as tofu, miso and tempeh. |
| Green tea | It may protect against the development and growth of prostate cancer. | Try drinking green tea instead of other hot drinks you have throughout the day |

The Prostate Cancer Charity makes every effort to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate cancer. We hope that these will add to any medical advice you have had. Please continue to talk to your doctor if you are worried about any medical issues.

The Prostate Cancer Charity is the UK's leading charity working with people affected by prostate cancer. We fund research, provide support and information, and campaign to improve the lives of men with prostate cancer. If you would like to make a donation to support our work, please call 020 8222 7666 or visit www.prostate-cancer.org.uk/donations

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*Calls are occasionally recorded for training purposes only. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and The Prostate Cancer Charity.

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Tell us what you think

We hope you have found this information useful. If you have any comments or suggestions about any of our publications, you can email literature@prostate-cancer.org.uk or write to The Information Team at The Prostate Cancer Charity, 100 Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE

References to sources of information used in the production of this fact sheet are available on our website.

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