



Diet and your risk of prostate cancer

THE
PROSTATE
CANCER CHARITY

This leaflet is for all men who want to eat more healthily and possibly lower their risk of getting prostate cancer. Family and friends may also find the information helpful. If you have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, you might like to read our Tool Kit fact sheet **Diet, exercise and prostate cancer**.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. About one in nine men (11 per cent) will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

You are more likely to get prostate cancer if:

- You are aged 50 or over.
- A close family member (father or brother) has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. You are more at risk if your relative was under the age of 60 when they were diagnosed, or if more than one close relative has prostate cancer.
- You are of black Caribbean or black African descent.

We do not know how to prevent prostate cancer but diet and a healthy lifestyle may be important in protecting against it. For more information about prostate cancer, please read our booklet **Know your prostate**.

Why should I improve my diet?

A healthy diet and regular exercise can improve your general wellbeing and reduce your risk of health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer. They may also help to lower your risk of prostate cancer.

Men living in Western countries are more likely to get prostate cancer than men in South and East Asian countries such as China and Japan. Researchers think that this may be because of the Western diet, which contains less fruit and vegetables and more dairy, red meat, sugar and processed foods.



Your daily diet

The eatwell plate below shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group. This includes everything you eat during the day, including snacks. **So, try to eat:**

- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- plenty of bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods – choose wholegrain varieties whenever you can
- some milk and dairy foods
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- just a small amount of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar



The eatwell plate

Fruit and vegetables

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods



Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Milk and dairy foods

Food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Exercise

Research shows that the more exercise you do, and the more strenuous the exercise, the lower your risk of prostate cancer. If you have any other health problems such as heart or lung disease, speak to your doctor before starting any new exercise programme.

Try to do 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day – enough to get out of breath, for example, brisk walking, cycling or swimming. If you are able to, gradually build up to three hours of strenuous exercise a week, such as running, tennis or football.

A healthy lifestyle can also help you to control your weight. Men who are a healthy weight may be less likely to be diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer than obese men.

Which foods may affect my risk of prostate cancer?

Eating a healthy, balanced diet with a wide variety of foods, including plenty of fruit and vegetables, may help to prevent prostate cancer.

Scientists have studied a few specific foods and so we know a bit more about how they affect prostate cancer risk. We need more research before we can say for sure whether any particular food protects against prostate cancer. We also need more information about how much of any food type you would need to eat for it to have an effect. However, there is some evidence that the foods listed here affect prostate cancer risk.

Some people like to take supplements to help prevent cancer. However, we do not yet know enough about how different nutrients work together to protect against cancer.

Try to eat a balanced diet rather than taking supplements which may not contain all the necessary nutrients.

If you do take supplements, make sure you do not take more than the recommended daily allowance as high doses of some supplements can be harmful.



Foods that may reduce prostate cancer risk

What?	Why?	How?
Tomatoes	May help to slow down the growth of prostate cancer. Tomatoes contain a compound called lycopene. Research suggests that foods containing lycopene probably protect against prostate cancer.	Cooked and processed tomatoes, such as tomato sauces, soups and pastes, appear to be more protective than fresh tomatoes. Try to eat two or more servings of cooked tomatoes a week
Soya and other pulses such as kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils	Some evidence suggests that pulses, especially soya, may reduce the risk of prostate cancer.	Include more soya, beans, peas and lentils in your diet. The more soya you eat, the lower your risk may be. Sources of soya include tofu, miso, tempeh, soya milk and soya yoghurts.
Selenium	May help to protect against prostate cancer. However, a recent large study found no effect.	Selenium is found in Brazil nuts, fish, seafood, liver and kidney. If you take supplements, do not take more than the recommended 0.075mg a day.
Green tea	Some evidence suggests that green tea may protect against prostate cancer. More research is needed.	Drink around six cups of green tea a day for it to have an effect. Try drinking it instead of your usual hot drinks.

There have been some studies that suggest that the following foods may also help to reduce the risk of prostate cancer: cruciferous vegetables (for example broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage), allium vegetables (for example garlic, onions and leeks), fish, especially oily fish such as mackerel and salmon (these contain omega-3 fatty acids which may protect against prostate cancer), pomegranate juice and vitamin E. However, the evidence about these foods is not very strong and we need more research into their effect on prostate cancer risk.

Foods that may increase prostate cancer risk

What?	Why?	How?
Dairy and calcium	<p>Eating large amounts of dairy products and calcium (more than 2,000mg of calcium a day) may increase your risk of prostate cancer.</p> <p>The more dairy products or calcium you eat, the greater your risk may be.</p>	<p>Reduce the amount of dairy foods you eat, such as milk and cheese. Do not exclude dairy from your diet altogether as calcium is important for healthy bones.</p> <p>Include other calcium-rich foods such as sardines with the bones, green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds and pulses.</p>
Processed meat	<p>There is some evidence that suggests that eating processed meat may increase your risk of prostate cancer.</p>	<p>Only eat processed meat occasionally. Processed meat is preserved by smoking, curing, salting or adding chemical preservatives. It includes ham, bacon, sausages, salami and burgers.</p>
Red meat (includes beef, lamb and pork)	<p>There is some evidence to suggest that eating red meat may increase your risk of prostate cancer.</p> <p>Other studies have found that red meat has no effect.</p>	<p>Limit the amount of red meat you eat to 300g cooked meat (400 - 450g raw meat) a week.</p> <p>Choose white meat such as chicken, turkey or fish instead, which do not appear to affect your risk of prostate cancer.</p>
Fat	<p>Some evidence suggests that a diet high in fat may increase your risk of prostate cancer. Other studies have found no link.</p>	<p>Eat a diet low in fat.</p> <p>Saturated fats, found in meat, dairy products and processed food such as cakes, biscuits and pastries are less healthy. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, found in nuts, oily fish, vegetable oils and olive oils, are healthier.</p>



Where can I find out more?

Speak to your doctor before making any big changes to your diet or lifestyle, especially if you have other health problems.

If you are concerned about prostate cancer, speak to your GP or call our confidential Helpline on **0800 074 8383**.

Other leaflets on prostate problems can be ordered free of charge from The Prostate Cancer Charity. Call our Helpline or visit **www.prostate-cancer.org.uk**

British Dietetic Association

www.bda.uk.com

Tel: 0121 200 8080

British Nutrition Foundation

www.nutrition.org.uk

Tel: 020 7404 6504

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/livewell

Penny Brohn Cancer Care

www.pennybrohncancercare.org

National helpline: 0845 123 23 10

World Cancer Research Fund

www.wcrf-uk.org

Tel: 020 7343 4205

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

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Confidential Helpline

0800 074 8383*

Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm, Wed 7pm - 9pm

www.prostate-cancer.org.uk



* Calls may be monitored for training purposes.
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