

## Carrots and sticks

How do you persuade your man to talk to his doctor about prostate health, when it's a subject he may even be too embarrassed to broach with you? You know him best, and you can probably think of the best way to gently twist his arm. But if you need a few tips, here are some techniques that other women have found useful:

- **Leave medical information leaflets lying around where he is likely to find them, i.e. in the bathroom, near the remote control, on the car seat**
- **Use friends' experiences as examples of times when a trip to the doctor resulted in peace of mind or a successful outcome**
- **Tug at his heartstrings, i.e. 'do it for me / us / the family, as it means such a lot'**
- **Compare it to breast checks. Women are used to going for regular breast check-ups, so going for a prostate check can be his equivalent**
- **Book a double appointment with the doctor for a check-up for both of you, and tell him he's going with you**

*"In my husband's case, we had no knowledge about prostate cancer and its symptoms. When we finally realised that something was not right, he was given a series of tests that confirmed he had advanced prostate cancer. I wish I had known more about prostate cancer and then I would have been in a position to insist on him being investigated earlier."*

Susie Hobday, wife of Kit Hobday, founder of the **Ignorance Isn't Bliss** campaign. This campaign aims to raise awareness of prostate cancer to ensure men get the appropriate treatment at the appropriate time.

For further information on all forms of prostate diseases contact:  
tel **020 8582 0248**  
email **info@prostate-research.org.uk**  
or visit **www.prostate-research.org.uk**

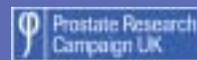


# For the man in your life...

# ...ignorance isn't bliss.

A woman's guide to the prostate

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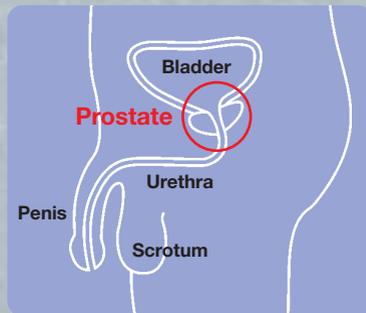
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## How good is he about staying healthy?

If he's like most men, he'll probably only visit a doctor as a last resort. Women, as a rule, are much better when it comes to health awareness. Whether you're a partner, a daughter, a mother or a friend, you'll appreciate how difficult it can be to persuade your man to go to his doctor to receive regular health check-ups. But as he gets older, it becomes even more necessary. With your help, any signs of prostate problems or prostate cancer can be detected as soon as possible, which greatly improves the chances of successful diagnosis and treatment.

## Where is the prostate and what does it do?

The prostate is a gland found only in men. It is located at the base of the bladder, surrounding the tube (called the urethra) through which urine travels out of the penis; this is why some men have problems with urinating when they have an enlarged prostate. Roughly the size of a walnut, the prostate's job is to produce the fluid that carries sperm.



## What is prostate cancer?

Prostate cancer is a disease of the prostate gland and generally affects men over the age of 50. In fact, it has become the most common cancer in men, with nearly 27,000 new cases detected in the UK each year<sup>1</sup>. The good news is that greater awareness of potential prostate health problems can help lead to early diagnosis.

## Symptoms of prostate cancer

As men get older, they naturally become more prone to developing an enlarged prostate. This can cause a variety of urinary problems and many of the symptoms of prostatic diseases, cancerous and benign, overlap. Although it is possible that men with very early prostate cancer may have no symptoms, if your man has experienced any of the following problems, he should consult his doctor immediately.

### What are the tell-tale signs? Ask him...

- Does he sometimes pass urine when he doesn't expect to?
- Does he pass urine three or more times during the night?
- Is he bursting to go and then find he barely produces a trickle?
- Does he strain to pass urine, or does it take a long time to start?
- When he passes urine is he always stopping and starting?
- Does he have any discomfort such as pain or a burning sensation when he passes urine?
- Does his bladder still feel full after he's finished?
- Is there any dribbling after he's stopped?
- Has there ever been blood in his urine?
- Does he experience back pain?

If any of these sound familiar, don't delay. A small sample of blood is taken from the man's arm to check for a substance called prostate specific antigen (PSA). Men with prostate cancer tend to have a higher level of PSA in their blood, however only one in three men with a high PSA will have cancer. Remember, his chances are greatly improved by early diagnosis and early intervention.

## Testing for prostate problems

The most commonly used initial tests for detecting prostate cancer are the PSA test and the Digital Rectal Examination (DRE). If cancer is suspected, it can only be confirmed by examining prostate tissue under a microscope following a biopsy. There are various treatments that could be offered to your man. The treatment that's right for him depends on the stage of the disease, his age and physical condition, and the choices he wishes to make after consulting a specialist.

## The benefit of regular checks

Most prostate problems are not cancer. But if cancer does exist, it usually responds well to treatment and may be cured if contained within the prostate gland. That's why it's important that you both become more aware of the health of his prostate and consider regular check-ups and screenings. Today, prostate cancer is easier to detect and treat, but the earlier your man comes forward the better. So help him to take the plunge, and book an appointment with his doctor or health centre.

<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Office, [www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?link=8843](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?link=8843)  
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypublicstatisticsforwalesfigures/content/health/cancer.htm>  
[http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3.jsp?pContentID=1488&p\\_applic=CCC&p\\_service=Content.show&](http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3.jsp?pContentID=1488&p_applic=CCC&p_service=Content.show&)