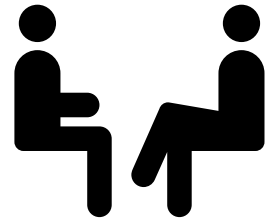


# Hormone therapy



## In this fact sheet:

- How does hormone therapy work?
- Who can have hormone therapy?
- What types of hormone therapy are there?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of hormone therapy?
- What are the side effects?
- How will I know if my treatment is working?
- Dealing with prostate cancer
- Questions to ask your doctor or nurse
- More information
- About us

This fact sheet is for anyone who is thinking about having hormone therapy to treat their prostate cancer. Your partner, family or friends might also find it helpful.

We describe the different types of hormone therapy, what the treatments involve, the possible side effects, and where you can get support. Read more about side effects in our booklet, *Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer*.

For information about abiraterone and enzalutamide, which are usually only used after other hormone treatments have stopped working, visit our website at [prostatecanceruk.org/treatments](http://prostatecanceruk.org/treatments)

Each hospital or GP surgery will do things slightly differently. Use this fact sheet as a general guide and ask your doctor or nurse for more information. You can also speak to our Specialist Nurses, in confidence, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.

## Symbols

These symbols appear in this fact sheet to guide you to more information:



Speak to our Specialist Nurses



Read our publications

## How does hormone therapy work?

Hormone therapy works by either stopping your body from making testosterone, or by stopping testosterone from reaching the cancer cells.

Prostate cancer cells usually need testosterone to grow. Testosterone is a hormone that controls how the prostate grows and develops. It also controls other male characteristics, such as muscle strength, erections, and the size and function of the penis and testicles. Most of the testosterone in your body is made by the testicles. A small amount also comes from the adrenal glands, which sit above your kidneys.

Testosterone doesn't usually cause problems but, if you have prostate cancer, it can make the cancer cells grow faster. If testosterone is taken away, the cancer will usually shrink, even if it has spread to other parts of your body.

Hormone therapy on its own won't cure your prostate cancer. If you have hormone therapy on its own, the treatment will aim to control your cancer and delay or manage any symptoms.

Hormone therapy can also be used with other treatments, such as radiotherapy, to make the treatment more effective.

## Who can have hormone therapy?

Hormone therapy is an option for many people with prostate cancer, but it's used in different ways depending on whether your cancer has spread.

### Localised (early) prostate cancer

If your cancer hasn't spread outside the prostate (localised prostate cancer), you might have hormone therapy alongside your main treatment. Hormone therapy can shrink the prostate and any cancer inside it, which makes the cancer easier to treat. It can also make your main treatment more effective. You might have hormone therapy:

- for six months before, during or after external beam radiotherapy
- for up to three years after external beam radiotherapy, if there is a risk of your cancer spreading outside the prostate
- for a few months before starting permanent seed brachytherapy, and before and after high dose-rate brachytherapy – both are types of internal radiotherapy
- before having high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU).

Hormone therapy is not usually given to men having surgery to remove their prostate (radical prostatectomy).



Read more about localised prostate cancer in our fact sheet, **Localised prostate cancer**. Or read more about these treatments in our other treatment fact sheets.

### Locally advanced prostate cancer

If your cancer has spread to the area just outside the prostate (locally advanced prostate cancer), you may have hormone therapy before, during

and after radiotherapy. Hormone therapy can help shrink the prostate and any cancer that has spread, and make the treatment more effective.

You may be offered hormone therapy for up to six months before radiotherapy. And you may continue to have hormone therapy during and after your radiotherapy, for up to three years.

Some men might have hormone therapy on its own if radiotherapy or surgery aren't suitable for them.



Read more about locally advanced prostate cancer in our fact sheet, **Locally advanced prostate cancer**.

### Advanced (metastatic) prostate cancer

Hormone therapy will be a life-long treatment for most men with prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (advanced or metastatic prostate cancer).

Hormone therapy shrinks the cancer and slows down its growth, wherever it has spread to in the body. It can't cure the cancer, but it can keep it under control, often for years. It can also help manage symptoms of advanced cancer, such as bone pain.

How long it will control the cancer for varies from man to man. It may depend on how aggressive your cancer is and how far it has spread. It's difficult for doctors to know exactly how long it will keep your cancer under control. Speak to your doctor or nurse about your own situation.



Read more about advanced prostate cancer in our fact sheet, **Advanced prostate cancer**.

### Prostate cancer that has come back after treatment (recurrent prostate cancer)

If your cancer has come back after treatment for localised or locally advanced prostate cancer, hormone therapy will be one of the treatments available to you. Read more in our booklet,



**If your prostate cancer comes back: A guide to treatment and support.**

### Unsure about your diagnosis and treatment options?

If you have any questions about your diagnosis at any time, ask your doctor or nurse. They can explain your test results and your treatment options. Make sure you have all the information you need.

For more information read our fact sheet,

**How prostate cancer is diagnosed**, or speak to our Specialist Nurses.



## Hormone therapy has kept my prostate cancer under control for seven years.

A personal experience

### What types of hormone therapy are there?

There are three main ways to have hormone therapy for prostate cancer. These are:

- injections or implants
- tablets
- surgery to remove the testicles (orchidectomy).

The type of hormone therapy you have will depend on whether your cancer has spread, any other treatments you're having, and your own personal choice. You may have more than one type of hormone therapy at the same time. The table on page 5 lists the different types of hormone therapy.

#### Injections or implants

These stop your body from making testosterone. They work by blocking the message from the brain that tells your testicles to make testosterone. Injections or implants are as good at controlling prostate cancer as surgery to remove the testicles. Ask your doctor or nurse whether you will have injections or implants. They are both given using a needle.

Injections use a needle to inject a small amount of liquid under the skin or into muscle. They may be given in your arm, abdomen (stomach area), thigh or bottom (buttock), depending on the type you're having.

Implants may be given as a small pellet that is placed under the skin in the abdomen and slowly releases the drug.

You will have the injections or implants at your GP surgery or local hospital. How often you have them will vary, depending on the type you are having. Some men have an injection or implant once a month, while others have an injection every three or six months.

#### LHRH agonists

LHRH agonists (luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone agonists) are the most common type of injection or implant. There are several available that all work in the same way, including:

- goserelin (Zoladex®)
- leuprorelin acetate (Prostap® or Lutrate®)
- triptorelin (Decapeptyl® or Gonapeptyl Depot®)
- buserelin acetate (Suprefact®).

LHRH agonists cause the body to produce more testosterone for a short time after the first injection. This usually happens about two or three days after you have the first injection. This temporary surge in testosterone could cause the cancer to grow more quickly for a short time, which might make any symptoms you have worse for about a week – this is known as a flare.

If you're having an LHRH agonist, you'll be given a short course of anti-androgen tablets as well (see page 4). This should stop any problems caused by this surge of testosterone. You'll usually start taking the anti-androgen tablets before your first injection or implant and keep taking them for a few weeks.

#### GnRH antagonists

GnRH antagonists (gonadotrophin-releasing hormone antagonists) are used less often than LHRH agonists. You may also hear them called GnRH blockers. There's one type available in the UK, called degarelix (Firmagon®). Degarelix

can be used as a first treatment for advanced prostate cancer that has spread to the bones. It may help to prevent metastatic spinal cord compression (MSCC), which can happen if cancer cells grow in or near the spine and press on the spinal cord.

When you start degarelix, you'll have two injections on the same day – one on each side of your abdomen (stomach area). You will then have one injection every month, or some men switch to an LHRH agonist.

Unlike LHRH agonists, degarelix doesn't cause a surge in testosterone with the first treatment, so you won't need to take anti-androgen tablets. Instead your testosterone levels will start to drop straight away, usually on the first day of having treatment. Symptoms such as bone pain should start to improve quickly.

### Keeping track of your injections

If you're having injections, it's a good idea to record all the dates so that you don't miss an appointment. There's space to record details in our booklet, **Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer**.

If your injection is a few days late, it shouldn't be a problem. But if your injection is late by a couple of weeks or more, your body may start to produce more testosterone, which may cause the cancer to start growing again. If you think you've missed an injection, tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.

## Tablets

### Anti-androgens

Anti-androgen tablets stop testosterone from reaching the cancer cells. They can be used:

- on their own
- before having injections or implants
- together with injections or implants
- after surgery to remove the testicles (orchidectomy).

There are different types of anti-androgen tablets, including:

- bicalutamide (Casodex®)
- cyproterone acetate (Cyprostat®)
- flutamide (Drogenil®).

Ask your doctor how long you'll need to take anti-androgens for, and whether you're having them with another treatment or on their own.

Anti-androgens taken on their own are less likely to cause sexual problems and bone thinning than other types of hormone therapy. But they may be more likely to cause breast swelling and tenderness (see page 8).

If your cancer is advanced, anti-androgens will be less effective than other types of hormone therapy. So if you have advanced cancer, your doctor will usually recommend an LHRH agonist.

### New (second-generation) hormone therapy

There are newer types of hormone therapy that can be used to treat some men with prostate cancer. You may hear them called new or second-generation hormone therapy. They may be used in combination with first line hormone therapy treatment, or when your prostate cancer has stopped responding other types of hormone therapy. They include abiraterone (Zytiga®), enzalutamide (Xtandi®), apalutamide (Erleada®) and darolutamide (Nubeqa®).

### Abiraterone acetate (Zytiga®)

Abiraterone tablets are most commonly given to men with advanced prostate cancer that's stopped responding to standard hormone therapy. But some hospitals now offer abiraterone as a first treatment for advanced cancer, for example if a man isn't fit enough for chemotherapy. If you've already had a type of hormone therapy called enzalutamide, abiraterone may not be an option for you. To find out more, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/abiraterone](http://prostatecanceruk.org/abiraterone)

### Enzalutamide (Xtandi®)

Enzalutamide tablets may be offered to men with advanced prostate cancer as a first treatment in combination with other treatments, or if your cancer has stopped responding to other types of hormone therapy. If you've already had a type of hormone therapy called abiraterone, enzalutamide may not be an option for you. To find out more, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/enzalutamide](http://prostatecanceruk.org/enzalutamide)

### Darolutamide (Nubeqa®)

Darolutamide is a new type of hormone therapy. It won't cure your prostate cancer, but it can help keep it under control. It has also been shown to give some men longer before their cancer spreads to other parts of the body (advanced prostate

cancer). This means it can help to delay the symptoms of advanced prostate cancer, and the need for further treatments such as chemotherapy. To find out more, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/darolutamide](http://prostatecanceruk.org/darolutamide)

### Apalutamide (Erleada®)

Apalutamide tablets may be offered to some men with localised prostate cancer or locally advanced prostate cancer that has stopped responding to other types of hormone therapy, but has not yet spread to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer). It has been shown, in some men, to delay the spread of prostate cancer to other parts of the body. To find out more, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/apalutamide](http://prostatecanceruk.org/apalutamide)

## Types of hormone therapy

What is it called?	How is it given?	How often do you have it?
<b>LHRH agonist</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leuprorelin acetate (Prostap®, Lutrate®)</li> <li>triptorelin (Decapeptyl®, Gonapeptyl Depot®)</li> <li>buserelin acetate (Suprefact®)</li> </ul>	<b>Injection</b>	Every one, three, six or twelve months. You'll also need anti-androgen tablets before your first injection, and for a few weeks after.
	<b>Implant</b>	Every one or three months.
<b>GnRH antagonist</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>degarelix (Firmagon®)</li> </ul>	<b>Injection</b>	Two injections on the same day for the first dose, then one injection each month.
<b>Anti-androgen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bicalutamide (Casodex®)</li> <li>cyproterone acetate (Cyprostat®)</li> <li>flutamide (Drogenil®)</li> </ul>	<b>Tablets</b>	Daily – check the instructions that come with the tablets and ask your doctor or nurse if you're not sure.
<b>New (second-generation) anti-androgens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>abiraterone (Zytiga®)</li> <li>enzalutamide (Xtandi®)</li> <li>apalutamide (Erleada®)</li> <li>darolutamide (Nubeqa®)</li> </ul>	<b>Tablets</b>	Daily – check the instructions that come with the tablets and ask your doctor or nurse if you're not sure.
<b>Orchidectomy</b>	<b>Surgery</b>	One-off operation.

## Surgery to remove the testicles (orchidectomy)

You may be offered an operation to remove the testicles, or the parts of the testicles that make testosterone. This is called an orchidectomy (or orchiectomy). It's not used as often as other types of hormone therapy.

Surgery is very effective at reducing testosterone levels, which should drop to their lowest level very quickly – usually in less than 12 hours. It also means that you won't need to have regular injections, so there's no risk that you'll miss an injection.

Surgery can't be reversed, so it's usually only offered to men who need long-term hormone therapy. If you're thinking about having surgery, your doctor may suggest trying injections or implants (see page 3) for a while first. This will give you and your doctor a chance to see how you deal with the side effects of low testosterone.

Short-term side effects of an orchidectomy include swelling and bruising of the scrotum (the skin containing the testicles). See page 6 for information on long-term side effects.

Some men find the thought of having an orchidectomy upsetting and worry about how they'll feel once their testicles are removed. Speak to your doctor if you have any concerns. If you don't want an orchidectomy, you can usually have a different type of hormone therapy instead.

The table on page 5 shows the different types of hormone therapy you might be offered for prostate cancer.

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## What are the advantages and disadvantages of hormone therapy?

What may be important to one person might be less important to someone else. So speak to your doctor or nurse about your own situation.

### Advantages

- It's an effective way to control prostate cancer, even if it has spread to other parts of your body.
- It can be used alongside other treatments to make them more effective.
- It can help to reduce some of the symptoms of advanced prostate cancer, such as urinary symptoms and bone pain.

### Disadvantages

- It can cause side effects that might have an impact on your daily life.
- It can't cure your cancer when it's used by itself, but it can help to keep the cancer under control, sometimes for many years.

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## What are the side effects?

Like all treatments, hormone therapy can cause side effects. These are usually caused by low testosterone levels. Hormone therapy affects men in different ways and you may not get all of the possible side effects. Some men only get a few side effects or don't get any at all. This doesn't mean that the treatment isn't working.

Some men find their side effects improve or get easier to manage the longer they're on hormone therapy. But if side effects don't improve, there are usually ways to manage them.

Side effects will usually last for as long as you're on hormone therapy. If you stop using it, the side effects should improve as your testosterone levels start to rise again. Your side effects won't stop straight away – it may take several months or years. For some men, the side effects may never go away completely.

The risk of getting each side effect depends on your type of hormone therapy and how long you take it for. If you have hormone therapy alongside another treatment, you may get side effects from that treatment as well.

Surgery to remove the testicles (orchidectomy) can't be reversed, so the side effects will be permanent. But there are treatments to help manage them.

Discuss the possible side effects with your doctor or nurse before you start or change your hormone therapy, or call our Specialist Nurses. If you know what side effects you might get, it can be easier to manage them.



If you have any concerns about your side effects or get any new symptoms, such as bone pain, speak to your doctor or nurse, or call our Specialist Nurses.



We describe the most common side effects of hormone therapy below. For more information about ways to manage them, read our booklet,



**Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer.**

### Hot flushes

Hot flushes are a common side effect of hormone therapy. They give you a sudden feeling of warmth in your body. You might feel very hot in your face, neck, chest or back. They can vary from a few seconds of feeling very hot to a few hours of sweating, which can be uncomfortable. Some men find that their hot flushes get milder and happen less often over time, but other men continue to have hot flushes for as long as they have hormone therapy.

There are things that can help manage hot flushes, including lifestyle changes and medicines. Speak to your doctor if you get hot flushes.

Some men also use complementary therapies to manage hot flushes, such as acupuncture, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and herbal remedies. But there isn't any strong evidence that these work. If you're thinking about using any complementary therapies, make sure you tell your doctor or nurse as they might interfere with your cancer treatment. You should also tell your complementary therapist about any cancer treatments you're having.



**I have hot flushes through the night. I used to be angry but now I use the cooling off time to stretch and plan the next day.**

*A personal experience*

### Extreme tiredness (fatigue)

Hormone therapy can make you feel extremely tired, which could affect your everyday life. Fatigue can come on quite suddenly and can affect your energy levels, motivation and emotions. This may improve over time and there are things you can do to help manage fatigue. These include being physically active and planning your day to make the most of when you have more energy. Read more in our fact sheet,



**Fatigue and prostate cancer.**

### Support for fatigue

Our Specialist Nurses can talk to you in depth about your experience of fatigue, and the impact it's having on your day-to-day life. They can also discuss ways to help you better manage your fatigue, such as behaviour and lifestyle changes.


There are also lots of tips on how to manage fatigue in our interactive online guide, [prostatecanceruk.org/guides](https://prostatecanceruk.org/guides)

### Changes to your sex life

Hormone therapy can cause the following changes to your sex life:


- less desire for sex (low libido)
- problems getting or keeping an erection (erectile dysfunction)
- producing less semen and having less intense orgasms
- changes to the size of your penis and the size or shape of your testicles.

There are treatments and ways to manage changes to your sex life. Hormone therapy reduces your desire for sex. So treatments that only work when you have desire, such as tablets, are unlikely to work. But injections, pellets, cream or a vacuum pump may still help you get an erection, even if your desire for sex is low. Read more in our booklet,

 **Prostate cancer and your sex life.**

### Weight gain


Some people put on weight while they're on hormone therapy, particularly around the waist. Some men find this hard to deal with, especially if they've never had problems with their weight in the past. Physical activity and a healthy diet can help you stay a healthy weight. Read more in our

 fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer.**

### Strength and muscle loss

Testosterone plays an important part in the physical make up of men's bodies. Hormone therapy can cause you to lose some muscle tissue. This can change the way your body looks and how physically strong you feel.

Regular gentle resistance exercise, such as lifting light weights or using elastic resistance bands, may help to prevent muscle loss and keep your muscles strong. Read more in our

 fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer.**

Some men may also get aching muscles or joint pain while they're on hormone therapy. This can happen when you lose muscle. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any pain in your muscles or joints. They can talk to you about ways to manage it.

### Memory and concentration

If you're having hormone therapy you may find it difficult to concentrate or focus on certain tasks. Or you might struggle to remember things as well as you used to. But we don't know for sure whether any changes are caused by the hormone therapy or by something else, because the evidence isn't very strong. For example, feeling tired, stressed, anxious or depressed can

all affect your memory or ability to concentrate. Memory problems can also happen naturally as you get older.

Whatever the cause, you may find problems with memory or concentration very frustrating. If you're having problems with your memory, talk to your doctor or nurse. They will be able to suggest things that may help.

### Breast swelling or tenderness

Hormone therapy may cause swelling (gynaecomastia) or tenderness in the chest area. The amount of swelling can vary from a small amount to noticeable breasts. Tenderness can affect one or both sides of the chest and can range from mild sensitivity to long-lasting pain.

Breast swelling is more common in men who are taking anti-androgen tablets (see page 4) on their own.

If you put on weight while you're on hormone therapy, this can also lead to larger breasts.

There are ways to reduce your risk of breast swelling and tenderness, or help treat it. Your clinician will be able to discuss available options with you.

### Loss of body hair

Some men lose their body hair while they are on hormone therapy. This is because testosterone plays a role in hair growth. So when testosterone is reduced, you might lose some of it. This can happen anywhere on your body, including your face, chest and pubic area. The hair should grow back if you stop hormone therapy.

### Bone thinning

Testosterone helps to keep bones strong. Long-term hormone therapy can make your bones weaker and cause a condition called osteoporosis. This means you may be more likely to have broken bones (fractures). Anti-androgens are less likely to cause bone thinning than other types of hormone therapy.




Your doctor may suggest you have a type of X-ray called a bone density or DEXA (dual energy X-ray absorptiometry) scan before you start hormone therapy. This will show any areas of weak bone. You might also have a bone density scan after you've been on hormone therapy for a few years. This will check for any signs of bone thinning.

Lifestyle changes such as being more active and changes to your diet may help reduce your risk of bone thinning. We don't yet know whether exercise can help to prevent bone thinning in men who are on hormone therapy. But regular physical activity could help to keep you strong and prevent falls that could cause broken bones.

These types of exercise may be particularly helpful:

- gentle resistance exercise, such as lifting light weights or using elastic resistance bands
- weight-bearing exercise, where you're standing up and have to support your own weight, such as walking, climbing stairs, tennis and dancing.

 Read more in our fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer**.


### Risk of other health problems

Hormone therapy may slightly increase your chance of developing other health problems, including:

- heart disease
- stroke
- type-2 diabetes
- blood clots
- anaemia.

Before you start hormone therapy, tell your doctor if you've ever had any of the problems listed above, or if you're taking medicines to treat another health problem, such as high blood pressure (hypertension) or high levels of cholesterol (hypercholesterolaemia).

You can reduce your risk of many health problems by making lifestyle changes, such as eating a well-balanced diet, drinking less alcohol, being physically active and stopping smoking.

 Read more in our fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer**.

### Changes to your mood

Hormone therapy can affect your mood. You may feel more emotional than usual or just 'different' to how you felt before. Some men find that they cry a lot. You may also get mood swings, such as feeling tearful then angry. Just knowing that hormone therapy might be causing these feelings can help.

Some men experience low moods, anxiety or depression. This could be caused by the hormone therapy itself, or by dealing with your prostate cancer diagnosis. It could also be due to the impact that treatment is having on your life.

If your mood is often very low, you are losing interest in things, or your sleep pattern or appetite has changed a lot, speak to your doctor or nurse. These can be signs of depression, but there are things that can help.

### Skin problems

If you are on degarelix, the skin around the area where you have the injections may feel red, hard, swollen and sore. This usually settles down after a few days and is often worse after the first injection than the later ones. Mild pain-relieving medicines, such as paracetamol, or using a cool pack on the area can help.




Read more about side effects of hormone therapy and ways to manage them in our booklet, **Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer**.

### How will I know if my treatment is working?


You will have regular appointments to check how well your treatment is working and monitor any side effects. These will involve regular prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood tests to measure the amount of PSA in your blood. PSA is a protein produced by cells in your prostate and also by prostate cancer cells, even if they have spread to other parts of your body. The PSA test is a good way to check how well your treatment is working.

How your treatment is monitored will depend on whether you're having hormone therapy as part of treatment that aims to cure your prostate cancer, or having life-long hormone therapy to keep advanced prostate cancer under control.

 You can contact your nurse at the hospital, or our Specialist Nurses, between appointments if you have any side effects or symptoms that you'd like to talk about.


### **If you're having treatment that aims to cure your prostate cancer**

If your PSA level falls and stays low, this usually suggests your treatment is working. How quickly your PSA level falls, and how low, will depend on the type of treatment you've had and will be different for everyone. Read more in our booklet,

 **Follow-up after prostate cancer treatment: What happens next?**

At some hospitals, you may have fewer hospital appointments, and be encouraged to take greater control of your own health and wellbeing. You might hear this called self-management. Instead of going to the hospital, you may talk to your doctor or nurse over the telephone. Men often prefer this type of follow-up, as it means you can avoid going to hospital appointments if you're feeling well and don't have any concerns. You, or your doctor or nurse, can arrange an appointment at any point if you have any questions or concerns.

Speak to your doctor or nurse about how long you will have hormone therapy for. After you stop having hormone therapy, you'll continue to have regular follow-up appointments, including PSA tests. If you've had radiotherapy, your PSA level may rise a little when you stop hormone therapy. If it continues to rise, this could mean that your prostate cancer has come back. Your doctor might suggest that you have some scans to see if anything has changed. They will then be able to talk to you about further treatments, if you need them. Read more in our booklet,

 **If your prostate cancer comes back: A guide to treatment and support.**

### **If you're having life-long hormone therapy for advanced prostate cancer**

If you have advanced prostate cancer, it's likely that you'll have hormone therapy as a life-long treatment.

As well as regular PSA tests, your doctor will check for any changes in symptoms such as pain or weight loss. You may also have regular scans to keep an eye on your cancer. If your PSA level starts to rise or your scans show changes, this may be the first sign that your hormone therapy is no longer working so well. If this happens, your doctor will talk to you about other possible treatment options. You may be offered other types of hormone therapy, a combination of different hormone therapy drugs, or a different type of treatment. Read more in our fact sheet, **Treatment options after your first hormone therapy.**

#### **Intermittent hormone therapy**

If you're on life-long hormone therapy and are finding the side effects difficult to manage, you might be able to have intermittent hormone therapy. This is where you stop hormone therapy when your PSA level is low and steady, and start it again if your symptoms get worse or your PSA rises to around 10 or higher. Some of the side effects, such as hot flushes and sexual problems, may improve while you're not having treatment. But it can take several months for side effects to improve, and some men never notice any improvement. Read more in our booklet, **Living with hormone therapy: A guide for men with prostate cancer.**

### **Dealing with prostate cancer**

Some men say being diagnosed with prostate cancer changes the way they think and feel about life. You might feel scared, worried, stressed, helpless or even angry.

At times, lots of men with prostate cancer get these kinds of thoughts and feelings. But there's no 'right' way to feel and everyone reacts in their own way.

This section suggests some things you can do to help yourself and people who can help. Families can also find this a difficult time and they may need support and information too. They may want to read our booklet, **When you're close to someone with prostate cancer: A guide for partners and family.**



### How can I help myself?

Everyone has their own way of dealing with prostate cancer, but you may find some of the following suggestions helpful.

### Look into your treatment options

Find out about the different treatments you could have. Bring a list of questions to your doctor or nurse. And ask about any side effects so you know what to expect and how to manage them. This will help you decide what's right for you.



### Talk to someone

Share what you're thinking – find someone you can talk to. It could be someone close or someone trained to listen, like a counsellor or your doctor or nurse. People involved in your care should be able to help with any questions or concerns you might have.

### Set yourself some goals

Set yourself goals and things to look forward to – even if they're just for the next few weeks or months.

### Look after yourself

Take time out to look after yourself. When you feel up to it, learn some techniques to manage stress and to relax – like breathing exercises or listening to music. If you're having difficulty sleeping, talk to your doctor or nurse.

### Eat a healthy, balanced diet

We don't know for sure whether any specific foods have an effect on prostate cancer. But eating well can help you stay a healthy weight, which may be important for men with prostate cancer. It's also good for your general health and can help you feel more in control. Certain changes to your diet may also help with some side effects of treatment. For more information, read our fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer.**



### Be as active as you can

Keeping active can improve your physical strength and fitness, and can lift your mood. We don't know for sure if physical activity can help slow the growth of prostate cancer. But it can help you stay a healthy weight, which may help to lower your risk of advanced prostate cancer. Physical activity can also help with some side effects of treatment. Even a small amount can help. Take things at your own pace. Read more in our fact sheet, **Diet and physical activity for men with prostate cancer.**



Get more ideas about how to look after yourself from Macmillan Cancer Support, Maggie's, Penny Bohn UK, or your nearest cancer support centre. You can also find more ideas in our booklet, **Living with and after prostate cancer: A guide to physical, emotional and practical issues.**



### Check out our online 'How to manage' guides

Our interactive guides have lots of practical tips to help you manage symptoms and side effects. We have guides on fatigue, sex and relationships, urinary problems, and advanced prostate cancer. Visit [prostatecanceruk.org/guides](http://prostatecanceruk.org/guides)

## Who else can help?

### Your medical team

It may be useful to speak to your nurse, doctor, GP or someone else in your medical team. They can explain your diagnosis, treatment and side effects, listen to your concerns, and put you in touch with other people who can help.

### Our Specialist Nurses



Our Specialist Nurses can help with any questions and explain your diagnosis and treatment options. They have time to listen, in confidence, to any concerns you or those close to you have.

### Trained counsellors

Counsellors are trained to listen and can help you find your own ways to deal with things. Many hospitals have counsellors or psychologists who specialise in helping people with cancer – ask your doctor or nurse if this is available. You can also refer yourself for counselling on the NHS, or you could see a private counsellor. To find out more, visit [www.nhs.uk/counselling](http://www.nhs.uk/counselling) or contact the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy.

### Our one-to-one support service

This is a chance to speak to someone who's been there and understands what you're going through. They can share their experiences and listen to yours. You can discuss whatever's important to you. We'll try to match you with someone with similar experiences.

### Our online community

Our online community is a place to talk about whatever's on your mind – your questions, your ups and your downs. Anyone can ask a question or share an experience.

### Support groups

At support groups, men get together to share their experiences of living with prostate cancer. Some groups also hold meetings online. You can ask questions, share worries and know that someone understands what you're going through. Some groups have been set up by health professionals, others by men themselves. Many also welcome partners, friends and relatives.

### Our fatigue support

Fatigue is a common symptom of prostate cancer, and a side effect of some treatments. Our Specialist Nurses can talk to you in depth about your experience of fatigue, and the impact it's having on your day-to-day life. They can also discuss ways to help you better manage your fatigue, such as behaviour and lifestyle changes.

### Our sexual support service

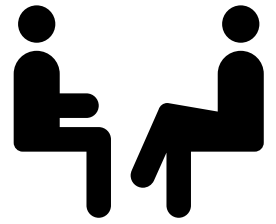


This is a chance for you, or your partner, to talk to a Specialist Nurse with an interest in sexual problems after treatment for prostate cancer. They can talk to you about the impact of treatment on your sex life and relationships, and discuss possible treatments or ways to deal with these changes.



To find out more about any of the above, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/get-support](http://prostatecanceruk.org/get-support) or call our Specialist Nurses on 0800 074 8383.

# Questions to ask your doctor or nurse



You may find it helpful to keep a note of any questions you have to take to your next appointment.

What is the aim of treatment?

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What type of hormone therapy are you recommending for me and why?

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How often will I have my injections or implants?

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How will my treatment be monitored?

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How long will it be before we know if the hormone therapy is working?

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What are the possible side effects, and how long will they last?

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What will happen if I decide to stop my treatment?

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Are there any clinical trials that I could take part in?

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## More information

### British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

Telephone: 01455 883 300

Information about counselling and details of therapists in your area.

### Cancer Research UK

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

Telephone: 0808 800 4040

Information about prostate cancer and clinical trials.

### College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists

[www.cosrt.org.uk](http://www.cosrt.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 8106 9635

Information about sexual and relationship therapy, and details of therapists who meet national standards.

### Macmillan Cancer Support

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 808 0000

Practical, financial and emotional support for people with cancer, their family and friends.

### Maggie's

[www.maggies.org](http://www.maggies.org)

Telephone: 0300 123 1801

Drop-in centres for cancer information and support, and an online support group.

### Penny Brohn UK

[www.pennybrohn.org.uk](http://www.pennybrohn.org.uk)

Telephone: 0303 3000 118

Runs courses and physical, emotional and spiritual support for people with cancer and their loved ones.

### Royal Osteoporosis Society

[www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 800 0035

Information and support for people with weak bones.

### Sexual Advice Association

[www.sexualadviceassociation.co.uk](http://www.sexualadviceassociation.co.uk)

Information about sexual problems and their treatments, including erection problems.

## About us

Prostate Cancer UK has a simple ambition: to stop men dying from prostate cancer – by driving improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and support.

Download and order our fact sheets and booklets from our website at [prostatecanceruk.org/publications](http://prostatecanceruk.org/publications) or call us on **0800 074 8383**.

At Prostate Cancer UK, we take great care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about prostate cancer. We hope these will add to the medical advice you have had and help you to make decisions. Our services are not intended to replace advice from your doctor.

References to sources of information used in the production of this fact sheet are available at [prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)

**This publication has been reviewed for accuracy and updated by:**

- Our Health Information team
- Our Specialist Nurses.



## Speak to our Specialist Nurses

0800 074 8383\*

[prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)

### Donate today – help others like you

Did you find this information useful? Would you like to help others in your situation access the facts they need? Every year, over 47,000 men face a prostate cancer diagnosis. Thanks to our generous supporters, we offer information free to all who need it. If you would like to help us continue this service, please consider making a donation. Your gift could fund the following services:

- £10 could buy a Tool Kit – a set of fact sheets, tailored to the needs of each man with vital information on diagnosis, treatment and lifestyle.
- £25 could give a man diagnosed with a prostate problem unlimited time to talk over treatment options with one of our Specialist Nurses.

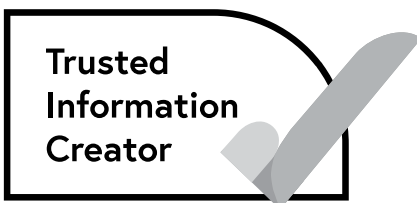
To make a donation of any amount, please call us on **0800 082 1616**, visit [prostatecanceruk.org/donate](http://prostatecanceruk.org/donate) or text **PROSTATE** to **70004**<sup>†</sup>.

There are many other ways to support us. For more details please visit [prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved](http://prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved)

<sup>†</sup>You can donate up to £10 via SMS and we will receive 100% of your donation. Texts are charged at your standard rate. For full terms and conditions and more information, please visit [prostatecanceruk.org/terms](http://prostatecanceruk.org/terms)



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 Follow us on Twitter: **@ProstateUK**

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**Call our Specialist Nurses from Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, Wednesday 10am - 5pm**

\* Calls are recorded for training purposes only.

Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

Prostate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Registered company number 02653887.

