

# A to Z of medical words



This fact sheet explains some of the medical words that you may read or hear when you are finding out about prostate problems and prostate cancer.

The  symbol shows where you can find out more information by reading one of our other publications. If you would like more information about anything you read in this fact sheet you can call our Specialist Nurses on our confidential helpline.

The diagram on page 13 shows the prostate and surrounding parts of the male body which are described in this fact sheet.

## A

### Active monitoring

This term can be used to describe both active surveillance and watchful waiting. See **active surveillance** and **watchful waiting**.

### Active surveillance

A way of monitoring prostate cancer with regular tests, rather than treating it straight away. The aim is to avoid or delay unnecessary treatment in men with less aggressive cancer. Tests include PSA tests, digital rectal examination (DRE) and repeat biopsies. These tests check for any changes that suggest that the cancer may grow, and treatment can then be offered at an early stage. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Active surveillance.**



**Active surveillance gave me time to come to terms with the fact that I had prostate cancer, which helped when the time came for my radical prostatectomy.**

A personal experience

### Adenocarcinoma

A cancer that occurs in the cells of a gland, such as the prostate gland. The majority of prostate cancers are adenocarcinomas. See also **carcinoma**.

### Adjuvant therapy

Treatment given in addition to the main treatment to increase the likelihood of successfully controlling the cancer. For example, hormone therapy given at the same time as radiotherapy. See also **neoadjuvant**.

### Advanced prostate cancer

Prostate cancer that has spread outside the prostate gland to other parts of the body, such as the bones. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Advanced prostate cancer.**

### Aggressive

This word may be used to describe a cancer that is more likely to develop and spread quickly. See also **Gleason score**.

### Alpha-blockers

Drugs that can be used to help treat benign prostatic enlargement (BPE). They relax the muscles around the neck of the bladder and in the prostate, making it easier to pass urine.

 Booklet - **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**



## Anaesthetic

Medicine which numbs an area of the body (local anaesthetic) or sends you to sleep (general anaesthetic) so that you can't feel anything during treatment.

## Androgens

Hormones that are responsible for male characteristics. The male sex hormone testosterone is an androgen. See also **hormones** and **testosterone**.

## Anti-androgens

Hormone therapy drugs that stop testosterone from reaching the prostate cancer cells. Without testosterone the cancer cells are not able to grow.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy**.

## Anus

Opening at the end of the back passage (rectum) to the outside of the body. See diagram on page 13.

## Atypical small acinar proliferation (ASAP)

The term used when your prostate tissue shows signs of prostate cancer but there is not enough evidence to say for certain whether you have prostate cancer or not. It is found by looking at prostate tissue under the microscope. If you are told you have ASAP, you may need to have another biopsy so that the pathologist can take another look at the cells in your prostate.

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## B

### Benign

This word is used to describe a tumour that is not cancerous. See also **tumour**.

### Benign prostatic enlargement (BPE)

A non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate. It is a common condition that mainly affects men over the age of 50. Also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Booklet -

 **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

## Biopsy

The removal of small samples of tissue to be looked at under a microscope to check for signs of cancer. A biopsy of the prostate gland may be used to help diagnose prostate cancer.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

### Biopsy core

A sample of tissue taken during a biopsy. See also **biopsy**.

## Bisphosphonates

A group of drugs which may be taken by men with prostate cancer that has spread to the bones and is causing pain. They do not treat the cancer but may help with symptoms. Tool Kit

 fact sheet - **Bisphosphonates.**

## Bladder

A sac made of muscle which collects and stores urine before it is passed out of the body. See diagram on page 13.

### Bladder neck incision

A procedure to help improve the flow of urine and relieve urinary symptoms by making small cuts in the neck of the bladder. See also

 **bladder**. Booklet - **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

## Bone marrow

Soft tissue found inside the bones that makes red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Chemotherapy treatment for prostate cancer affects how well your bone marrow works.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Chemotherapy.**

## Bone scan

A scan of the body, similar to an X-ray, which uses a radioactive dye to highlight the bones and find any areas of damage. A bone scan may be used to find out whether prostate cancer has spread to the bones. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

## Brachytherapy

A type of internal radiotherapy for treating localised prostate cancer. This uses either radioactive seeds which are implanted

permanently into the prostate gland where they give off a low dose of radiation, or a temporary source of high dose radiation. Tool Kit fact sheets - **Permanent seed brachytherapy** and **High dose rate brachytherapy**.



## C

### Cancer

A condition where cells in the body grow in an abnormal or uncontrolled way to form a tumour. These cells may spread to surrounding tissue and other parts of the body. See also **carcinoma** and **adenocarcinoma**.

### Carcinoma

Cancer which begins in the tissues that cover the outside and line the inside of an organ. Carcinomas are the most common type of cancer. See also **adenocarcinoma**.

### Catheter (urinary)

A thin tube that is used to drain urine from the bladder out of the body. This can be a tube through the penis (urethral catheter), or through the abdomen (suprapubic catheter).



**At first I was reluctant about self-catheterising, but once I was trained I found it easier than expected and it gave me more independence than a permanent catheter.**

A personal experience

### Cells

The basic building blocks which make up every part of the body. Cells normally multiply in a controlled way. Cancer occurs when cells start multiplying in an uncontrolled way, forming a tumour.

### Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy uses anti-cancer drugs to kill cancer cells. It is used to treat prostate cancer that has spread outside the prostate gland and is no longer responding to hormone therapy. Chemotherapy is used to help control symptoms of prostate cancer and not to cure it.



Tool Kit fact sheet - **Chemotherapy**.

### Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

A nurse who specialises in a particular medical condition. A clinical nurse specialist for prostate cancer may be part of your multi-disciplinary team (MDT). They are also sometimes known as key workers. See also **multi-disciplinary team (MDT)** and **key worker**.

### Clinical trial

A medical research study involving people, who are always volunteers. Trials may investigate new drugs and combinations of drugs, as well as new technology and procedures. Tool Kit fact sheet - **A guide to prostate cancer clinical trials**.



**Before I decided to consent to the trial I felt it was important to educate myself about it. I was aware that the research team wanted me to know the virtues of the trial, but I wanted to know about the drawbacks as well.**

A personal experience

### Combined androgen blockade

A form of hormone therapy that uses both an LHRH agonist and an anti-androgen to treat prostate cancer. Also called maximal androgen blockade or complete androgen blockade. See also **LHRH agonists** and **anti-androgens**.



Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy**.

### Complementary therapy

Therapy which can be used alongside medical care. Examples include acupuncture, massage and making changes to your lifestyle and diet. Some people find these therapies help them to cope with cancer symptoms and side effects such as tiredness. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Diet, physical activity and prostate cancer.**

### Computerised tomography (CT) scan

A scan that uses a computer linked to an X-ray machine to take a series of images of the body. You may have a CT scan to find out whether the cancer has spread outside the prostate. Tool Kit

 fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

### Cryotherapy

A treatment that uses freezing and thawing to kill the cancer cells in the prostate gland. It can be used to treat prostate cancer that has come back after treatment with radiotherapy or brachytherapy. It is also sometimes offered as a first treatment for prostate cancer. It may be available as part of a clinical trial. Also known as cryosurgery or cryoablation. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Cryotherapy.**

### Cystitis

Inflammation of the bladder that causes a burning sensation when you pass urine, difficulty passing urine, or the need to pass urine more often. Radiation cystitis can be a side effect of radiotherapy.

### Cytotoxic drugs

Medicines used in chemotherapy to kill prostate cancer cells, wherever they are in the body.

 See also **chemotherapy**. Tool Kit fact sheet - **Chemotherapy.**

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## D

### Diagnosis

Identification of a health problem or condition.

### Diarrhoea

Passing frequent, loose or watery stools (faeces or poo) from the bowel. See also **faeces**.

### Digital rectal examination (DRE)

A physical examination in which a doctor or nurse feels the prostate gland with a gloved, lubricated finger through the back passage (rectum). The DRE is used to help diagnose prostate problems and prostate cancer.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

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## E

### Enlarged prostate

See **benign prostatic enlargement**.

### Erectile dysfunction (ED)

Difficulty getting or keeping an erection. Erectile dysfunction has many possible causes. It can be a side effect of some treatments for prostate cancer. Also known as impotence. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Sex and prostate cancer.**

### External beam radiotherapy

Radiotherapy using high energy X-ray beams directed at the prostate gland from outside the body. This type of treatment may be used to treat localised or locally advanced prostate cancer or to ease symptoms from prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **External beam radiotherapy.**

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## F

### Faecal incontinence

Problems controlling bowel movements which lead to stools (faeces or poo) leaking from the back passage. Also known as bowel incontinence. See also **faeces**.

### Faeces

Waste matter that is passed out of the body from the back passage (rectum). Also known as stools, bowel motions or poo.

### Fatigue

Extreme tiredness or exhaustion which can interfere with everyday life. This can be a side effect of treatments for prostate cancer, particularly hormone therapy.

## Fistula

An abnormal opening between two parts of the body that may be caused by injury or infection. This is an uncommon complication of some treatments for prostate cancer, where a hole forms between the back passage (rectum) and the tube that carries urine through the penis (urethra).

## Flare

When cancer grows more quickly for a short time after treatment is started because of a temporary rise in the level of testosterone. This can be caused by the first injection of an LHRH agonist. May also be called a tumour flare. Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy**.



## Fraction

A single session of a course of radiotherapy treatment. See also **radiotherapy**. Tool Kit fact sheet - **External beam radiotherapy**.



## Frequency

The frequent need to pass urine. This can be a symptom of a prostate problem.

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## G

### General practitioner (GP)

A doctor who deals with a range of medical problems in people of all ages. Also known as a family doctor.

### Genes

The biological information that is inherited from your parents. Genes control how the body grows and works. See also **genetics**.

### Genetics

A condition may be described as genetic if it is caused by a faulty gene being passed on in a family. Researchers are looking into the role of genes in the development of prostate cancer. You are two and a half times more likely to develop prostate cancer if your father or brother has it. See also **genes**.

## Gleason grade

A grading system which shows how aggressive prostate cancer is likely to be. Cancer patterns in a prostate biopsy sample are given a grade. Non-aggressive cells are grade 1 and the most aggressive are grade 5. However, today doctors usually only give a Gleason grade of 3 or more. See also **Gleason score**. Tool Kit fact sheet -



**How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

## Gleason score

Your Gleason score is worked out by adding together the grades of the most common pattern and the pattern with the highest grade in the biopsy samples. The higher the Gleason score, the more aggressive the cancer and the more likely it is to spread. Gleason scores run from 2 to 10. However, today doctors usually only give a Gleason grade of 3 or more, so your Gleason score will normally be between 6 and 10. See also **Gleason grade**. Tool Kit fact sheet



- **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

## Gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) antagonist

A type of hormone therapy that is given by injections in the abdomen. It blocks the message from the brain that tells the testicles to produce testosterone. Tool Kit fact sheet -



**Hormone therapy.**

## Gynaecomastia

Swelling of the breast area. This can be a side effect of some types of hormone therapy.



Booklet - **Living with hormone therapy.**

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## H

### Hesitancy

The need to wait a while before being able to pass urine, even when the bladder is full.

### High intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU)

A treatment that uses high frequency ultrasound waves to heat and destroy cancer cells. HIFU is a relatively new treatment for prostate cancer and you may be offered it as part of a clinical trial. Tool Kit fact sheet -



**High intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU).**

## Holmium laser enucleation of the prostate (HoLEP)

A type of surgery that may be used to treat benign prostatic enlargement (BPE). A laser is used to remove tissue from the prostate gland that is pressing on the urethra. Also known as laser prostatectomy. See also **benign prostate enlargement (BPE)**. Booklet -

 **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

## Hormone refractory / hormone resistant

Prostate cancer that is no longer responding as well to treatment with any type of hormone therapy and has started to grow. You may also hear this called castrate resistant. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Treating prostate cancer after hormone therapy.**

## Hormones

Chemicals found in the body that help control some of the body's functions. The male hormone testosterone can cause prostate cancer to grow more quickly. See also **androgens** and **testosterone**.

## Hormone therapy

Hormone therapy controls prostate cancer by stopping testosterone reaching the prostate cancer cells. There are different types of hormone therapy, which can be given by injection, implants, tablets or surgery. Hormone therapy will not cure prostate cancer but it can keep the cancer under control for many months or years before you may need to consider other treatment options. It can also be used with other treatments to help make them more effective. Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy**. Booklet - **Living with hormone therapy**.



## Hospice

Hospices provide a range of services to men living with advanced prostate cancer and their families. Specialist doctors and nurses provide treatment to manage symptoms as well as emotional, spiritual and practical support. Hospices provide day services, a short stay to improve control of symptoms, and also a place of care at the end of life. Hospices may also have nurses who are able to visit you in your home. See also **palliative care**.

## Hot flushes

A common side effect of hormone therapy. Hot flushes give a sudden feeling of warmth. They can affect each man differently, from feeling overheated for a few seconds to hours of sweating and discomfort. Booklet - **Living with hormone therapy**.



## Image guided radiotherapy (IGRT)

The term used to describe using images of the prostate to guide radiotherapy. This uses either regular computerised tomography (CT) scans, or seeds (known as fiducial markers) which are implanted into the gland and can be seen on X-rays and used as a marker. See also **computerised tomography (CT) scan**. Tool Kit fact sheet - **External beam radiotherapy**.



## Impotence

See **erectile dysfunction**.

## Incontinence

See **faecal incontinence** and **urinary incontinence**.

## Intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT)

A type of 3D conformal radiotherapy that gives different doses of radiation to different parts of the area being treated. This can help to reduce the dose given to healthy tissues surrounding the prostate gland and the risk of side effects. See also **3D conformal radiotherapy**. Tool Kit fact sheet - **External beam radiotherapy**.



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## K

### Key worker

Your main point of contact. This is usually your specialist nurse but may also be another member of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT). They help to coordinate your care and can guide you to the appropriate team member or sources of information. See also **multi-disciplinary team (MDT)** and **clinical nurse specialist (CNS)**.

## L

### Laparoscopic prostatectomy

Surgery to remove the prostate gland through several small cuts in the abdomen. Also known as keyhole surgery. See also **radical prostatectomy** and **robotic prostatectomy**. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Surgery: radical prostatectomy**

### LHRH agonists

Luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone (LHRH) agonists are a type of hormone therapy which stops the body producing testosterone. They are given by injection or implant.

See also **testosterone**. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Hormone therapy.**

### Libido

The desire to have sex. Hormone therapy can reduce your libido. See also **Hormone therapy**

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Sex and prostate cancer**

### Localised prostate cancer

Prostate cancer that is contained within the prostate gland. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Localised prostate cancer.**

### Locally advanced prostate cancer

Prostate cancer that has spread to the area just outside the prostate gland, but has not spread to other parts of the body. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Locally advanced prostate cancer.**

### Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS)

Problems passing urine, including leaking urine, needing to pass urine frequently or urgently, and needing to get up in the night to pass urine. LUTS are common in older men and have several possible causes. See also **frequency, hesitancy, urgency, urinary incontinence** and **nocturia**.

### Lymphatic system

This is part of the body's immune system which helps the body fight infection. The lymphatic system is made up of a network of vessels, which carry a fluid called lymph, and lymph nodes. See also **lymph nodes**.

### Lymph nodes

These are small bean-shaped glands which are part of the lymphatic system. They are clustered in various sites around the body including the groin and pelvis. The lymph nodes in the groin and pelvic area are near the prostate gland and are a common place for prostate cancer to spread to. Lymph nodes are sometimes called lymph glands. See also **lymphatic system**.

### Lymphoedema

A swelling in part of the body resulting from the build up of lymph. Cancer-related lymphoedema may be caused by a blockage of the lymphatic system. This blockage may be caused by either the cancer itself or some treatments for cancer, for example surgery or radiotherapy. See also **lymphatic system**.

## M

### Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan

An imaging technique that uses magnets to create a detailed picture of the prostate and the surrounding tissues. You may have an MRI scan to find out whether the cancer has spread outside the prostate. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

### Malignant

This word is used to describe a tumour that is cancerous and has the ability to spread. See also **tumour**.

### Maximal androgen blockade

See **combined androgen blockade**.

### Metastasis

Prostate cancer cells which have spread from the prostate gland and moved to other parts of the body. Cancers that have spread may be called metastases, secondary cancers or secondaries. A cancer that has spread is said to have metastasised.

### Metastatic spinal cord compression

Pressure on the spinal cord. This is a rare complication in advanced prostate cancer where the cancer has spread to the spine

(spinal metastases). The cancer presses on nerves in the spine causing symptoms.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Metastatic spinal cord compression (MSCC)**

### Morbidity

Relating to disease or the side effects of treatment.

### Mortality rate

The number of people who die from a disease.

### Multi-disciplinary team (MDT)

The team of health professionals or specialists involved in your care. The team may include a specialist nurse, a consultant oncologist and a consultant urologist. See also **clinical nurse specialist, oncologist, and urologist.**

## N

### Neoadjuvant

Treatment given before the main treatment to increase the likelihood of it being successful. For example, hormone therapy may be given before brachytherapy to shrink the prostate and make radiotherapy more successful. See also **adjuvant therapy.**

### Nerve-sparing

Treatment that aims to avoid damaging nerves. For example, during surgery to remove the prostate, the surgeon may try to avoid damaging the nerves that help control erections. Tool Kit

 fact sheet - **Surgery: radical prostatectomy**

### Nocturia

The need to get up at night to pass urine. This can be a symptom of a prostate problem or a side effect of some of the treatments for prostate

 cancer. Tool Kit fact sheet - **Urinary problems after prostate cancer treatment.**

## O

### Oestrogen

A female sex hormone that may be used as a type of hormone therapy for men with advanced prostate cancer. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Hormone therapy.**

### Oncologist

A doctor who specialises in cancer treatments other than surgery, for example radiotherapy or chemotherapy. There will usually be an oncologist in your multi-disciplinary team. See also **multi-disciplinary team (MDT).**

### Oncology

The speciality of the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

### Orchidectomy

A type of hormone therapy for prostate cancer which involves an operation to remove the testicles or the parts of the testicles that make testosterone.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy.**

### Osteoporosis

A condition in which the bones become weaker. This can have many causes. In prostate cancer it is a possible side effect of some types of hormone therapy. Also called bone thinning.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Hormone therapy.**

## P

### Palliative care

The aim of palliative care is to control pain and other symptoms and to meet a person's emotional, social and spiritual needs. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of advanced prostate cancer, and is not just for men in the final stages of life. Men with advanced prostate cancer may have palliative care for many months or years.



**I have acupuncture and reflexology every week and they are the most effective pain relievers for me. Not only do they maintain suppleness but if I have a specific pain site they remove the pain within a short time.**

*A personal experience*

## Palliative radiotherapy

Radiotherapy given to slow down the growth of cancer and control symptoms in men with advanced prostate cancer, rather than trying to get rid of the cancer. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Radiotherapy for advanced prostate cancer.**

## Pathologist

A doctor who specialises in studying cells and tissues under the microscope to identify diseases. A pathologist will examine biopsy samples to diagnose prostate cancer.

## Pelvis

The space surrounded by the hip bones where the bladder, lower part of the bowel and the prostate gland are located.

## Penile rehabilitation

Treatment for erectile dysfunction which aims to improve sexual function after treatments for prostate cancer. Options include tablets, injections and vacuum pumps which can be started in the weeks and months after treatment. See **erectile dysfunction**. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Sex and prostate cancer.**

## Perineum

The area between the scrotum and the back passage (rectum). See diagram on page 13.

## Proctitis

Inflammation of the lining of the bowel. This can be caused by radiotherapy for prostate cancer and may lead to symptoms such as bleeding from the back passage, difficulty emptying the bowels or a feeling of needing to go to the toilet to empty the bowels but finding you are unable to. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **External beam radiotherapy.**

## Prognosis

The expected outcome of a treatment. Often used to describe life expectancy.

## Prostatectomy

See **radical prostatectomy**.

## Prostate gland

Only men have a prostate gland. The prostate gland's main job is to make most of the fluid that carries sperm, called semen. It lies underneath the bladder and surrounds the tube that men pass urine and semen through (urethra). See diagram on page 13. Booklet -

 **Know your prostate: A guide to common prostate problems.**

## Prostate specific antigen (PSA)

A protein that is produced by the prostate gland. It is normal for all men to have a small amount of PSA in their blood. A raised PSA level can be due to a variety of reasons including age, infection, benign prostatic enlargement (BPE)

 and prostate cancer. Booklet - **Understanding the PSA test: A guide for men concerned about prostate cancer.**

## Prostatic intraepithelial neoplasia (PIN)

Changes in the cells that line the prostate gland. It is found by looking at prostate tissue under the microscope. PIN is not the same as prostate cancer and does not cause any symptoms. However, some research suggests that finding PIN in the prostate gland may mean that there is a greater chance of finding prostate cancer cells in the future. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Prostate biopsy results: PIN and ASAP.**

## Prostatitis

Inflammation or infection of the prostate gland.

 Booklet - **Prostatitis: A guide to infection or inflammation of the prostate.**

## PSA density

Your PSA level in relation to the volume of your prostate gland. See also **prostate specific antigen (PSA)** and **prostate gland**.

## PSA test

A test that measures the amount of PSA in the blood. It can be used alongside other tests to help diagnose prostate problems and to monitor prostate cancer growth and the effectiveness of treatment. See also **prostate specific antigen**

 **(PSA)**. Booklet - **Understanding the PSA test: A guide for men concerned about prostate cancer.**

## PSA velocity

The rate at which your PSA level rises over time. This can give an indication of how quickly prostate cancer is likely to grow in the future. This is sometimes referred to as PSA doubling time. See also **prostate specific antigen (PSA)**.

## R

### Radiation cystitis

See **cystitis**.

### Radical prostatectomy

Surgery to remove the whole prostate gland and seminal vesicles. See also **laparoscopic prostatectomy** and **robotic prostatectomy**. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Surgery: radical prostatectomy.**

### Radiographer

Someone who takes images, for example with X-rays, to diagnose conditions (diagnostic radiographer), or provides radiotherapy to treat cancer (therapeutic radiographer). See also **radiotherapy**.

### Radiologist

A doctor who specialises in diagnosing medical conditions using X-rays and scans.

### Radiotherapy

The use of high energy radiation to destroy cancer cells. There are different types of radiotherapy, including external beam radiotherapy and brachytherapy. Tool Kit

 fact sheets - **External beam radiotherapy, Permanent seed brachytherapy, High dose rate brachytherapy, and Radiotherapy for advanced prostate cancer.**

### Rectum

The last part of the bowel before the anus. Also called the back passage. See diagram on page 13.

### Recurrent prostate cancer

Prostate cancer that has returned after treatment. Booklet - **Recurrent prostate cancer: A guide to treatment and support.**



## Remission

Someone who has had cancer is said to be in remission when tests no longer show any signs of cancer.

## Risk factor

Something that may make a person more likely to develop a disease. For example, the risk of getting prostate cancer increases with age, so age is a risk factor for prostate cancer.

## Robotic prostatectomy

Laparoscopic prostatectomy (keyhole surgery) which is carried out with the help of a robot. See **laparoscopic prostatectomy** and **radical prostatectomy**. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Surgery: radical prostatectomy.**

## S

### Salvage therapy/Second line treatment

A treatment aimed at getting rid of the cancer if it has returned after the first treatment.

 Booklet - **Recurrent prostate cancer: A guide to treatment and support.**

### Saturation biopsy

A type of biopsy which involves taking more tissue samples from different areas of the prostate gland than a normal biopsy. You may have a saturation biopsy if previous biopsy results are normal but cancer is still suspected.

 Also known as a template biopsy. See also **biopsy**. Tool Kit fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

### Screening

Testing the general population to find out if people have a disease at an early stage, before symptoms develop. There is currently no screening programme for prostate cancer in the UK.

### Scrotum

The pouch of skin that contains the testicles. See diagram on page 13.

### Secondary cancer

See **metastasis**.

## Self-management

Being actively involved in looking after your own health and wellbeing. Examples include changing your diet and taking regular exercise which may help manage the impact of prostate cancer and its treatment. Tool Kit fact sheet -

 **Diet, exercise and prostate cancer.** Booklet - **Living with and after prostate cancer.**

## Seminal vesicles

The two glands situated behind the prostate gland and bladder which produce some of the fluid in semen. See diagram on page 13.

## Specialist team

See **multi-disciplinary team.**

## Spinal cord compression

See **metastatic spinal cord compression.**

## Sphincter (urinary)

The circular muscle that surrounds the tube which urine is passed through (urethra) and controls the flow of urine from the bladder.

## Staging

A way of describing how far cancer has spread. The most common method used in prostate cancer is the TNM (Tumour-Nodes-Metastases)

 system. Tool Kit fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

## Steroids

Steroids are a type of drug which can be used as treatment for prostate cancer when hormone therapy is no longer working well. They can reduce swelling, inflammation and pain and may improve appetite. They are also used alongside other treatments such as chemotherapy.

Steroids can be given as tablets or injections.

 Tool Kit fact sheets - **Pain and advanced prostate cancer, Treating prostate cancer after hormone therapy and Chemotherapy**

## Stricture

A narrowing of a tube in the body. A stricture in the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body (urethra) can be caused by inflammation and some treatments for prostate cancer.

## T

### Template biopsy

See **saturation biopsy.**

### Testicles / testes

Part of a man's reproductive system. The testicles are contained in the scrotum and produce testosterone and sperm. See diagram on page 13.

### Testosterone

Male sex hormone. Testosterone can make prostate cancer cells grow faster. See also **androgens** and **hormones.**

### Tissue

A group of cells that perform a specific job. For example, prostate tissue.

### Trans-rectal ultrasound (TRUS)

A scan that uses sound waves to make an image of the prostate gland using a probe inserted into the back passage (rectum).

TRUS can be used to guide a prostate biopsy.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **How prostate cancer is diagnosed.**

### Trans-urethral resection of the prostate (TURP)

Surgery to remove prostate tissue that is pressing on the tube which you pass urine through (urethra). TURP may be used to treat benign prostatic enlargement (BPE). Fact sheet -

 **Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP).**

### Tumour

Abnormal growth of cells. Tumours can be benign or malignant. See **benign** and **malignant.**

## U

### Urethra (male)

The tube that carries urine from the bladder, and semen from the reproductive system, through the penis and out of the body. See diagram on page 13.

## Urgency

A sudden and immediate need to go to the toilet. This can be an urgency to pass urine which can be a symptom of prostate problems, or an urgency to open the bowels, which can be a side effect of radiotherapy.

## Urinary incontinence

Problems controlling when you pass urine. This can range from leaking a few drops of urine when you cough or sneeze to being unable to control when you pass urine at all.

 Tool Kit fact sheet - **Urinary problems after prostate cancer treatment.**



**The continence nurse was supportive and reassuring. She made me feel very comfortable and gave me helpful advice on a personal basis.**

*A personal experience*

## Urodynamics

A test to measure how well the bladder is working. This is sometimes used to help diagnose benign prostatic enlargement (BPE).

 Booklet - **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

## Urologist

A doctor who specialises in the urinary and reproductive systems. Urologists are also surgeons.

## Urology

The study and treatment of diseases of the urinary system, which includes the prostate gland.

## W

### Watchful waiting

A way of monitoring prostate cancer with the aim of avoiding treatment unless symptoms develop. This is because prostate cancer is often so slow growing that it might not cause you any problems in your life time. If symptoms develop, treatment will be started with the aim of controlling the growth of the cancer rather than getting rid of it. Watchful waiting may be suitable for men with other health problems or who may be less able to cope with treatment. See also **active surveillance**. Tool Kit fact sheet

 - **Watchful waiting.**



**Having watchful waiting means that I have to trust my consultant and his team to monitor my condition when necessary with PSA tests and occasionally, DRE. I accept that I am in good hands and find that I can forget the problem between hospital visits.**

*A personal experience*

### 3D conformal radiotherapy

A type of external beam radiotherapy that directs the radiotherapy beams to fit the size and shape of the prostate. This reduces the risk of side effects. Tool Kit fact sheet -

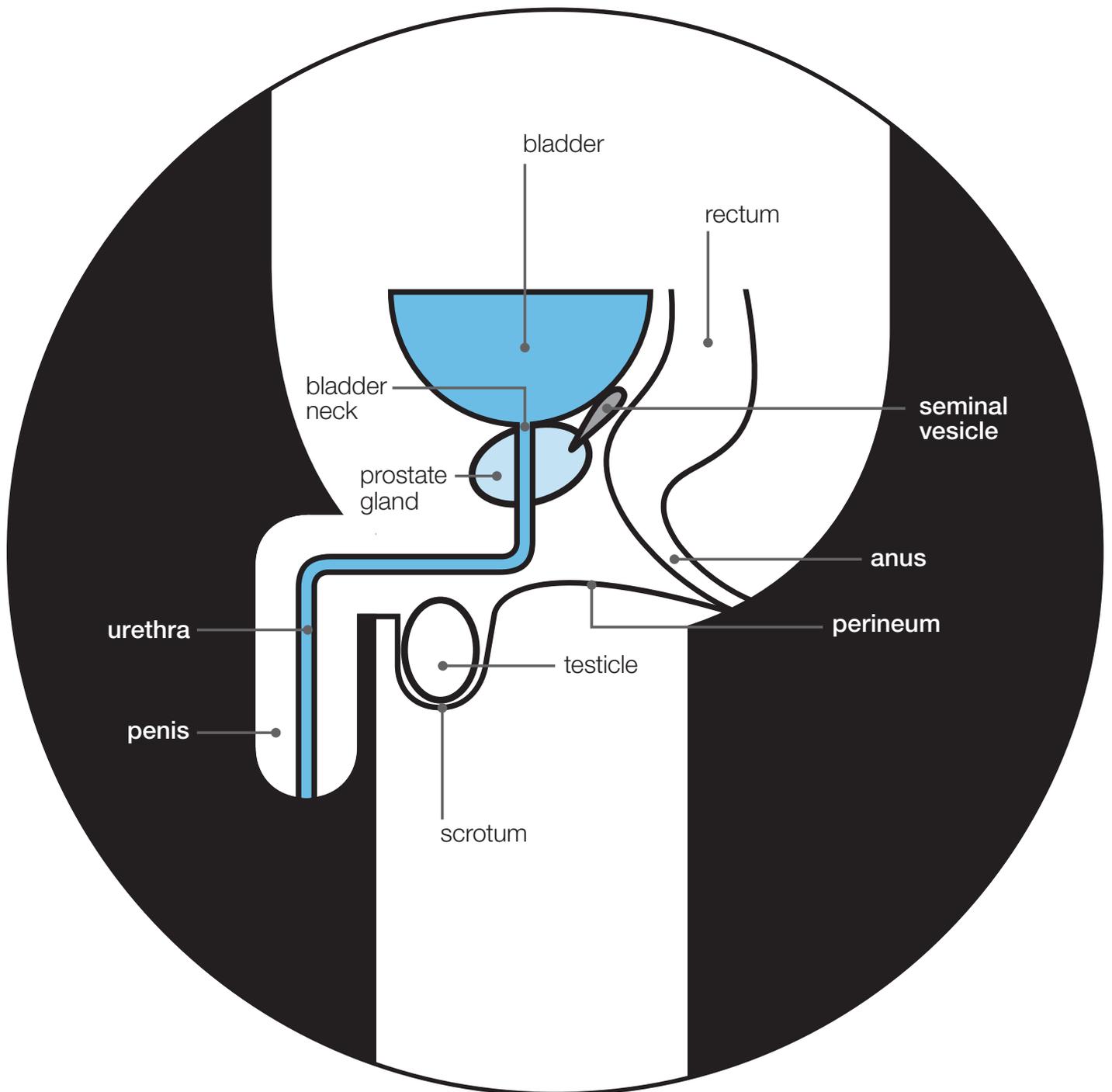
 **External beam radiotherapy.**

### 5-alpha reductase inhibitors

Drugs that are used to treat benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) by shrinking the prostate or stopping it getting any bigger.

 Booklet - **Enlarged prostate: A guide to diagnosis and treatment.**

## The prostate gland and surrounding parts of the male body





## About us

Prostate Cancer UK fights to help more men survive prostate cancer and enjoy a better life.

This fact sheet is part of the Tool Kit. You can order more Tool Kit fact sheets.

All of our publications are available to download and order from the website. You can also order printed copies by calling **0800 074 8383** or emailing **literature@prostatecanceruk.org**

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**

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If you have any comments about our publications, you can email:

**literature@prostatecanceruk.org**



## Speak to our Specialist Nurses

**0800 074 8383\***

**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, 40,000 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/donations](http://prostatecanceruk.org/donations) or **text PROSTATE to 70004\***. There are many other ways to support us. For more details please visit [prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved](http://prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved)

\*\*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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**Call our Specialist Nurses from Mon to Fri 9am - 6pm, Wed 10am - 8pm**

\*Calls are recorded for training purposes only.

Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Prostate Cancer UK.

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