



# TAKING CONTROL

A GUIDE FOR MEN WITH  
ADVANCED PROSTATE CANCER  
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

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## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS BOOKLET

Learn about the common issues and symptoms associated with advanced prostate cancer. Find useful tips to manage your symptoms and take care of yourself.

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO LIFE WITH ADVANCED PROSTATE CANCER

## What is advanced prostate cancer?

Once prostate cancer has spread outside the prostate gland, it is defined as advanced. It could affect the lymph nodes, nearby tissues, bones, or other body regions. Metastatic prostate cancer is defined by spreading beyond the tissues that are directly adjacent to the prostate gland.



## Coming to terms

There is no easy way to receive an advanced cancer diagnosis or to learn that your cancer has progressed. Struggling to understand what it means for your life can leave you feeling anything from overwhelmed and completely numb to angry, sad and afraid. The important thing to understand is that there's no "right" way to deal with the feelings you have right now. You and your loved ones will process this new stage in your life in the way that works best for you.

## Looking after yourself

Your healthcare team will help you put together a treatment plan that best suits your needs, but there are also many things that you and your loved ones can do to enrich your quality of life over this journey. Remember that everyone responds differently to cancer and its treatment, so it's important to work together to find the solutions that work best for you. By looking after your own mental, emotional and physical well-being, you'll be better equipped to deal with the changes that come from living with advanced cancer and its treatment. The role you play in looking after yourself is just as important as any medicine or treatment.

## Moving forward

When you're ready, this booklet is designed to help you make positive lifestyle choices as you live with advanced prostate cancer. However, while this booklet contains suggestions and tips that may assist you in making healthy lifestyle choices and which may help manage your symptoms, it is not a replacement for professional medical advice. Only your doctor or other healthcare team members can determine if any of these options are appropriate for you and you should discuss any lifestyle changes described in this booklet with them.

Many people find that this kind of diagnosis gives them a new perspective on life and a new drive to focus on the people, relationships and activities that matter most to them. We sincerely hope that this booklet is helpful in managing your symptoms so that you can focus on living your life to the fullest and building a legacy and memories with the people you love.

## The importance of healthy eating

Good nutrition is important at every stage of your prostate cancer journey. Clinical research suggests that a heart-healthy diet can lead to a better prognosis, while also protecting your heart health. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle – through diet and physical activity – can set you up for success by improving your energy, strength and overall health.


### Following the Canadian food guide can help

- 1 Meet your vitamin, mineral and other nutrient needs
- 2 Reduce your risk for heart disease
- 3 Contribute to your overall health and energy

## Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings

*This guide shows how many servings of each food group you should aim to consume per day.*

### Guidelines for men ages 51+

Food group	Number of servings	Following the guidelines
 <b>VEGETABLES AND FRUITS</b>	7	<p><b>Aim to eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable per day.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Romaine lettuce, spinach and broccoli are examples of dark green vegetables</li> <li>- Sweet potatoes, carrots and squash work well as orange vegetables</li> </ul> <p><b>Look for fruit and vegetables that are steamed, baked or stir-fried</b> – and avoid those that are deep fried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It's best to choose vegetables and fruits that are not prepared with lots of added salt, fat or sugar</li> </ul> <p><b>Choose whole fruits and vegetables more often than juice, to meet your daily servings goal.</b></p>

Food group	Number of servings	Following the guidelines
 <b>GRAIN PRODUCTS</b>	7	<p><b>Whole-grain products should make up at least half of your daily grain product servings.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look for whole grain options such as barley, brown rice, quinoa, oats, wild rice, whole grain breads and pasta</li> </ul> <p><b>Compare nutrition facts – and choose grain products lower in salt, fat and sugar.</b></p>
 <b>MILK AND ALTERNATIVES</b>	3	<p><b>Choose lower fat milk products.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For products made from milk (such as cheeses or yogurts), compare nutrition facts and select options that are lower in fat</li> </ul> <p><b>Drink milk every day.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You should aim to drink 2 cups of milk per day to make sure you're getting enough vitamin D.</li> <li>- Choose either skim, 1% or 2% milks, or fortified soy beverages</li> </ul>
 <b>MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES</b>	3	<p><b>Look for lean meats and alternatives that have limited added salt and fat.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remove skin on poultry and visible fat on meat</li> <li>- Bake, roast or poach prepared meats and alternatives</li> <li>- When choosing pre-packaged meats, compare nutrition facts and choose those with less sodium and fat</li> </ul> <p><b>Eat at least 2 servings of fish per week.*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For example, you could choose to eat herring, char, mackerel, salmon or trout</li> </ul>

\* Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain fish types. Refer to [www.healthcanada.gc.ca](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca) for the latest information.

To learn more about Canada's Food Guide, visit

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>



## Making healthy choices

When choosing which foods to eat, it's generally best to eat a diet that is:

- **Plant-based**

Try to eat lots of fruit and vegetable servings. Beans, legumes and whole grains also work well.

- **Low in saturated fat**

Try reducing or eliminating your intake of high fat meats, milk and other dairy products. Try limiting your consumption of butter, mayonnaise and baked goods.

- **High in fibre**

Whole grain breads, oats, barley, quinoa and bulger are all high-fibre choices.

- **Low in simple sugars**

Aim to limit your intake of candies, baked goods, and other foods made with simple sugars and refined flours.

- **Low in salt**

Prepared foods can contain high levels of salt – so try to choose reduced-salt prepared meals, canned soups, snacks (unsalted or lightly salted nuts and chips) and condiments (reduced sodium soy sauce and ketchup). Using salt substitutes and using more herbs and spices while cooking can also help provide flavour without the added salt.



## Tips for eating well

These tips can help you keep your body well-fueled:

- ✓ **Indulge in snacks**

Eat smaller, more frequent snacks, every few hours, throughout the day. If appetite is an issue, don't be shy about treating yourself to your favourite foods – your body may need the calories.

- ✓ **Eat more protein**

Protein is important to help your cells grow and repair themselves. Try to eat more fish, poultry, lean red meat, eggs, dairy products and nuts.

- ✓ **Drink more water**

Drinking water regularly is important for staying hydrated. You should aim to drink more water when you're out in hot weather, or involved in physical activity.

- ✓ **Consider supplements**

Different varieties of milkshakes, bars or powders are available at most pharmacies, and can be useful sources of protein and calories when you're on the go or simply don't have the time or energy to prepare a meal for yourself.

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## Working with your healthcare team

Since every case is different, your healthcare team may have specific guidance about what you should and shouldn't eat. In particular, a dietitian plays an important role on your healthcare team to help create meal plans that meet your personal needs.

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## Staying active through treatment

During cancer treatment it's normal to not feel much like exercising, but it's recommended by doctors to be as active as possible during your treatment and recovery. Regular physical activity has been shown to:

- Improve your mood and self-esteem, and reduce stress and anxiety
- Boost your energy and strength
- Stimulate your appetite
- Help you sleep
- Help you manage side effects like fatigue, nausea and constipation

An important role of physical activity is helping to maintain a healthy body weight, which has been shown to improve your ability to tolerate cancer treatment and its side effects.



## Ways to get moving

Each person's needs for an exercise program will be unique, and you should always talk to your doctor before starting or changing your exercise program. However, in general you should aim to maintain endurance, strength and flexibility so that you can continue to do the things that you want to do.

### ✓ Start slow

Something as simple as walking is a good start. As you feel more confident, increase how often, how fast or how far you walk.

### ✓ Find your best time

Be active at the time of day when you have the most energy. If you can't make it through one long session, break your activities up into several shorter ones separated by rests.

### ✓ Share something new

If you've been putting off trying a new and different activity or hobby, now is the time to give it a try! Bring along a friend and share in the excitement of learning something new.

### ✓ Make it part of your routine

The house still needs to be cleaned, the lawn still needs to be mowed, and the car still needs to be washed – these all count as exercise! Doing a little bit every day will help keep you productive and active.

## Working with your healthcare team

As mentioned above, always check with your healthcare team before starting or changing your exercise program. Cancer treatment can put you at higher risk of injury and infection, so not every activity will be right for you. You may also speak to a physiotherapist about specific exercises you can do, depending on the types of treatment (e.g. surgery) you've had.

# EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

## Recognizing changes in your mood

Cancer treatment, and especially an advanced prostate cancer diagnosis, are stressful and life-changing events. It's normal to feel anxious, nervous or depressed.

Some of the symptoms of anxiety and stress include:	Some of the symptoms of depression, especially in older people, include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive worrying, or restlessness</li><li>• Trouble sleeping, tiredness and exhaustion, or excessive sleeping</li><li>• Muscle tension</li><li>• Fast heartbeat, trembling, chest tightness, high blood pressure, nausea, dizziness and shortness of breath</li><li>• Trouble concentrating, irritability or impatience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feelings of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, anger, irritability or frustration</li><li>• Problems with memory, concentration, confusion or personality changes</li><li>• Sleep problems</li><li>• Losing interest in going out and socializing</li><li>• Suicidal thinking</li></ul>

If you find that your symptoms are lasting most of the day, every day, for more than two weeks, you should talk to your doctor and get help.

## What causes anxiety and depression?

It's important to understand that it isn't a sign of weakness or failure, or your inability to cope with your diagnosis.

The triggers of anxiety and depression can be different for everyone.

## Tips for managing your mood

### ✓ Knowledge is power

Some people feel less anxious knowing everything about their cancer treatment, while others get stressed out by all the details. Figure out where you're most comfortable to help control treatment-related anxiety.

### ✓ Identify your triggers

Use a journal to write down your feelings and help you identify the events that make you feel most anxious or depressed – then you can figure out how to deal with them. Remember to record the positive things, too!

### ✓ Talk it out

Start by talking with just one person about your feelings – like a family member, friend or someone who's had a similar cancer experience. All it takes is one conversation to open up and take steps towards feeling better.

### ✓ Surround yourself with positivity

Whether it's people, events or pets, surround yourself with the things that make you happiest and the activities you enjoy.

### ✓ Eat well and be active

A healthy diet helps maintain proper nutrition, and exercise releases natural mood-boosters called endorphins. Try low-impact and stress-relieving activities like yoga. See pages 7-9 for more tips!

### ✓ Cut down on caffeine

As part of a healthy diet, watch how much caffeine (a stimulant) you consume in drinks like coffee, tea or cola. You can easily start cutting back by switching to a decaffeinated version of the same drink.

## Working with your healthcare team

It's very important to keep your healthcare team updated on your mood as you progress through your cancer journey. Open and honest communication about how you're feeling is key to them being able to help you.





# FATIGUE

## What is it?

Fatigue is the most common symptom reported by people with cancer and it can be acute or chronic. Some of the common symptoms include:

- Sleeping more than usual, or still feeling exhausted after a good night's sleep
- Tiring quickly during activities, or having lower energy all of the time
- Changes in your emotions (like irritability or mood swings), or a general loss of interest in life
- Trouble concentrating, thinking, or remembering

While feeling tired may seem like a minor inconvenience compared to some of the other issues you experience, it can have a serious impact on your day-to-day activities and quality of life.

## Fatigue Facts

Studies of prostate cancer patients have found that:

- As many as 74% of prostate cancer patients experienced cancer-related fatigue
- Fatigue is associated with all treatments for prostate cancer

## What causes it?

There are many factors that can contribute to fatigue when someone is going through cancer treatment. Some of the common reasons include:

- **Cancer and cancer treatment**  
Cancer itself can cause changes in your body, like increasing its need for energy. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy may also cause fatigue as your body works to repair your damaged non-cancerous cells. Treatments that cause side effects like anemia and pain, or that affect your hormones, can also contribute to fatigue.
- **Poor nutrition**  
When you have cancer, your body's need for nutrients and its ability to process those nutrients may change. However, side effects like low appetite, nausea and vomiting can make it difficult to meet your nutrient needs.

- **Lack of exercise**

If you're normally an active person, the effects of fatigue can feel more pronounced because you don't have the energy to maintain your usual level of physical activity.



## Tips for managing it

- ✓ **Get enough sleep**

Keep a regular routine to help you get a good night's sleep. Do things that relax you leading up to bed time, and make sure your bed, pillows and sheets are comfortable. Avoid sleeping too much during the day as this can make you feel more tired.

- ✓ **Save your energy**

Note when your energy is high, and plan activities and appointments around those times of day. You may need to be active for shorter periods, and don't forget to plan rests as well.

- ✓ **Ask for help**

Your family and friends are there to support you, so don't be shy about taking them up on offers to help. Cooking, chores, driving and helping with pets are just some of the simple ways they can help.

- ✓ **Exercise**

Regular exercise (both aerobic and weight training) can help improve your energy levels and reduce fatigue – even something as simple as walking. Be sure to check with your doctor before starting or changing your exercise program. See page 9 for more tips!

- ✓ **Eat right**

Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids, especially when your energy and appetite are good. In between, try to snack every 2-3 hours. See page 7 for more tips!

- ✓ **Manage your mood**

Depression and anxiety can increase your feelings of fatigue. See pages 10-11 for tips on how to look after your emotional well-being.

## Working with your healthcare team

If your fatigue has a specific cause, your healthcare team can take steps to treat it, such as nutritional supplements, medicines or blood transfusions, so always keep them up to date on how you're feeling.



## What is it?

Erectile dysfunction (ED), also called impotence, is the inability to get and keep an erection firm enough to have sex – even though you can still experience pleasure, have an orgasm and be fertile. ED is a common side effect of prostate cancer treatments, including surgery (radical prostatectomy), radiation and hormonal therapies. Depending on your type of treatment and your age, your ED may be permanent or only temporary.

## Tips for managing it

If you have ED as the result of prostate cancer treatment, it can be yet another source of frustration in your life. But there are a few ways you can help gain control over your situation:

### ✓ Don't give up

Don't assume you have a permanent problem and nothing can be done. Depending on your treatment you may recover your erectile function, but it can take a long time. In the meantime, try to control your anxiety around sexual encounters and activity, which can make ED worse.

### ✓ Involve your partner

Honest and open communication can help make sure they know that this isn't a sign of diminished interest in them, and can help you explore other ways to satisfy one another. Treatment is often more successful when a man involves his partner.

### ✓ Manage your mood

Stress, anxiety and depression can seriously impact intimacy and erectile function. Be open with your healthcare team about all the issues surrounding your treatment and recovery.

## Working with your healthcare team

Depending on the cause of your ED your healthcare team has several options to help you achieve erections, including:

- Medications (including pills, injections, and medicated urethral systems)
- Vacuum constriction devices
- Penile prosthesis

## What is it?

People with advanced cancer may experience pain. It can impact you both physically and emotionally, affecting healing and contributing to fatigue, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Depending on your cancer and the type of treatments you received, you may experience pain that is acute (short-term), chronic (long-term) or breakthrough (pain that occurs despite a regular dose of pain medicine).

## Tips for managing it

The most important thing to know about cancer pain is that you don't have to accept living with it. Your healthcare team has many ways to help you manage pain, and there are a few things you can do to help them:

### ✓ Speak up

Nobody is expecting you to “just deal with it” and nobody will think you're weak for admitting you're in pain. The more your healthcare team knows, the better equipped they are to help get your pain under control.

### ✓ Track your pain

Note when pain happens, what triggered it, where it is, how strong it is (try a simple scale from 1 to 10) and what you did to try and make it better. This kind of information is very helpful to your healthcare team as they try to get your pain under control.

### ✓ Stick with it

It may take hours or days to get your pain under control. In the meantime, many strong pain medications can have side effects like confusion, lethargy and sleepiness. Don't let these stop you from sticking with your pain medication regimen! After the first few doses, these side effects usually resolve and you'll feel more like yourself again.

## Working with your healthcare team

You and your healthcare team can put together a pain management plan. This may include:

- Over the counter medication
- Prescription medication
- Treatments that remove the source of the pain e.g. radiation

## What are they?

About 50-80% of men on hormonal therapies for prostate cancer will experience some sort of hot flashes. They usually start as a sudden feeling of warmth in the face and chest that then spreads to the rest of the body in waves, lasting anywhere from 2 to 30 minutes. You may also experience sweating, reddening of your skin, a racing heart or feelings of anxiousness. The exact cause of hot flashes is unknown, but it may be related to how hormones interact with a part of your brain called the hypothalamus, which controls body temperature.

## Tips for dealing with them

Hot flashes usually get better as your body gets used to treatment or if medication is stopped, but there are a number of things you can do on a daily basis to help manage them:

- ✓ Dress in layers so that you can remove them when you get hot, and wear looser clothing in lighter fabrics (e.g. clothes made with cotton).
- ✓ Stick to air conditioned or cool areas with lots of air circulation (e.g. from a fan or open window).
- ✓ Avoid hot drinks, caffeine, spicy foods, tobacco and alcohol.
- ✓ Practice taking slow, deep breaths when you feel a hot flash coming on, or try relaxing activities like yoga or meditation.

## What is it?

Many men who have radiation, TURP (transurethral resection of the prostate) or radical prostatectomy will experience incontinence – the involuntary leakage of urine. The good news is that it's usually only temporary, and by 6 months after surgery most men will only lose a few drops of urine when lifting, sneezing or coughing (also called stress incontinence). Some men may also experience urge incontinence (also called overactive bladder) – a strong, sudden urge to urinate.

## Tips for managing it

Incontinence can make you feel self-conscious and embarrassed, leading to a decreased enjoyment of life. If you're older, it can also increase your risk of falling as you rush to the toilet. But there are many lifestyle changes you can make to minimize its impact on you as you heal:

- ✓ Drink less, especially before bed. Try to avoid alcohol, caffeine, carbonated and sweet drinks, and spicy and acidic foods.
- ✓ Schedule regular trips to the bathroom every few hours, and train your bladder by gradually increasing the time.
- ✓ Work out your pelvic floor muscles (which help hold in urine) with Kegel exercises. Your doctor can give you advice on how to get started.

## Working with your healthcare team

In addition to lifestyle modifications, there are a few ways your healthcare team can further help you get incontinence under control:

- Medications that reduce bladder irritability, decrease bladder spasms or improve bladder emptying
- Surgical procedures to eliminate blockages in the urethra
- Implants to help close off the flow of urine



# SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

## Understanding your role

You may be family or a friend. Your loved one with cancer may be older, younger, a sibling or a coworker. You may be a spouse or partner. All of these things affect how you relate to your loved one, and the kind of support that you're able to provide. It's important to understand your own strengths and weaknesses, and if needed build a team of caregivers with complementary strengths to help share the burden.

In general, people with cancer may need three types of support:

### 1 Emotional:

Listening, providing comfort, encouraging sharing of feelings and providing company

### 2 Practical:

Helping with personal care, making appointments and travel

### 3 Financial and legal:

Helping find assistance for the cost of treatment, arranging wills and reviewing legal concerns



## Things you can do

Within each of these three categories there are many things that you can do to help your loved one. Some useful ways to provide assistance include:

### • Helping them live as normally as possible

When time is precious, it's important to help them prioritize spending time on the activities they enjoy the most, with the people who matter most.

### • Helping with visits to the doctor

Taking notes at appointments, organizing medical information, tracking symptoms and sharing them with the healthcare team.

### • Helping with insurance and reimbursement

Collecting receipts, filling out forms and submitting them to insurance providers as needed.

## Caring for yourself, too

Caregiver burnout is a serious problem that's difficult to notice when you're focusing all of your attention on your loved one – but you need to remember to look after yourself, too.

- Watch for the symptoms of depression
- Find “you time” to rest, focus on yourself and do something you enjoy
- Get a good night's sleep every night, or take naps. It helps manage your stress levels
- Be physically active. This can help you to stay physically well and avoid getting sick, allowing you to continue to support your loved one



# RESOURCES

## Helpful resources for patients and caregivers

### **PROCURE**

Information and support for patients and their families, health professionals, employers and the general public through free access to specialized professionals at 1 855 899-2873, a comprehensive website, special events, various publications and a free book on prostate cancer.

[procure.ca](http://procure.ca)

### **Prostate Cancer Canada**

Information, support and educational resources.

[prostatecancer.ca](http://prostatecancer.ca)

### **Prostate Cancer Information Service (PCIS)**

A helpline for patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and the general public. Information specialists on the line can provide support and answer questions by phone or email.

[prostatecancer.ca/PCIS](http://prostatecancer.ca/PCIS)

### **Prostate Cancer Canada Network (PCCN)**

A forum for patients and caregivers to share information and support.

[prostatecancer.ca/Supporting-You/Services/Support-Groups](http://prostatecancer.ca/Supporting-You/Services/Support-Groups)

### **Canadian Cancer Society**

Information and support for all types of cancer.

[cancer.ca](http://cancer.ca)

### **Service Canada**

Information on Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits and/or Compassionate Care Benefits.

[servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/sickness.shtml](http://servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/sickness.shtml)

### **Government of Canada: Seniors Canada**

Includes services for caregivers.

[seniors.gc.ca](http://seniors.gc.ca)

### **Dietitians of Canada**

Nutritional information on a broad range of topics, including guidance for seniors.

[dietitians.ca](http://dietitians.ca)

### **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)**

Physical activity guidelines, endorsed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, for children and adults (including those 65+ years old)

[csep.ca/guidelines-for-other-age-groups](http://csep.ca/guidelines-for-other-age-groups)





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#### Medical disclaimer

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