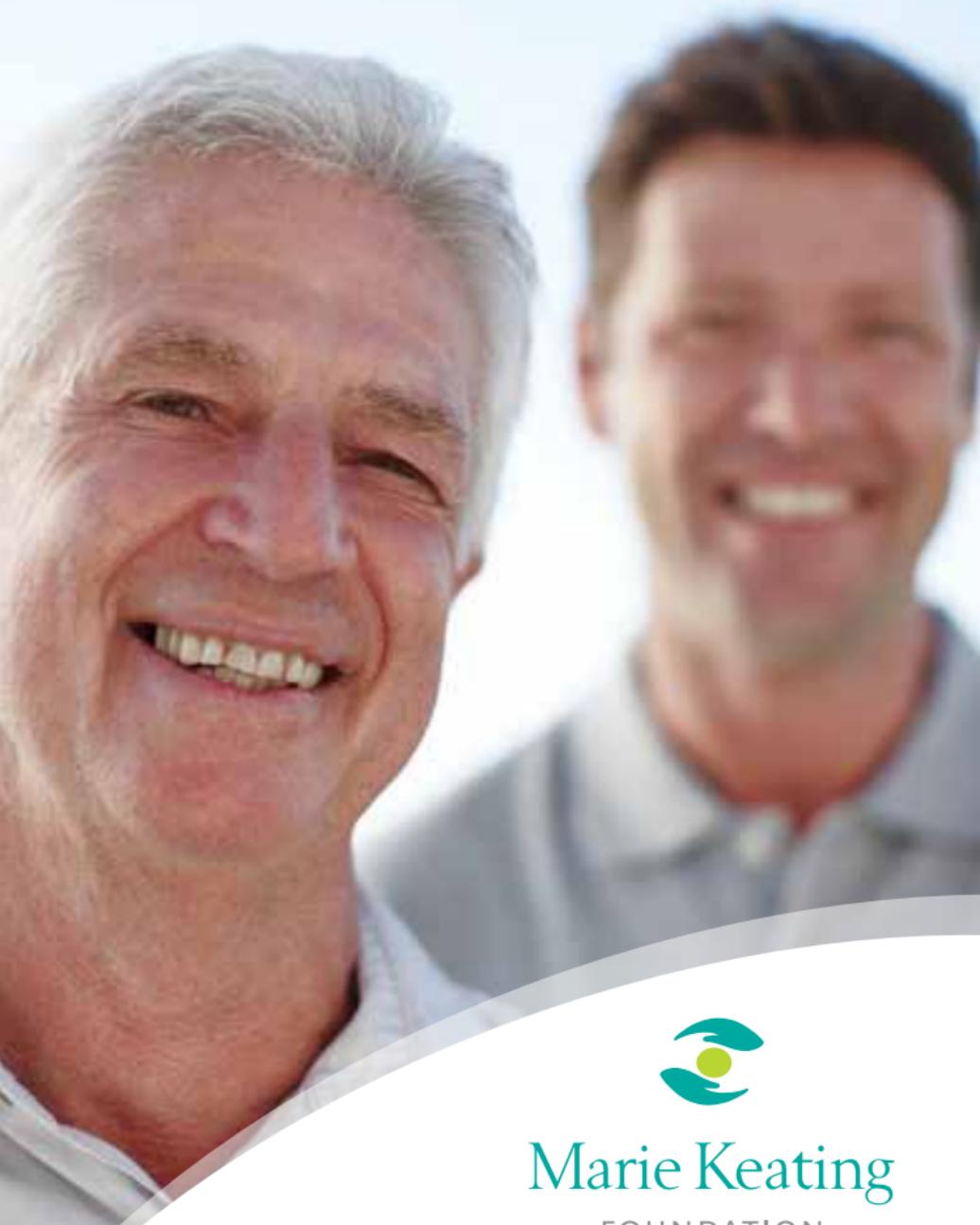


Prostate cancer

What you need to know



Marie Keating

FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

prostate cancer

the facts

- Prostate cancer is the most common male cancer in Ireland. 3,400 men are diagnosed here each year.
- Many men with early prostate cancer have no symptoms at all.
- Because you may not have symptoms, if you are a man over the age of 50, it is important to talk to your doctor if you have any of the risk factors outlined in this leaflet
- There has been a large increase in the numbers of men diagnosed in recent years due to the increasing use of the PSA blood test • Prostate cancer responds well to treatment and, if detected early, it can be treated successfully

The prostate and prostate cancer

The prostate is a small gland found only in men and is part of the male reproductive system. It is the size of a walnut and surrounds the first part of the tube (urethra) which carries urine from the bladder to the penis. The prostate lies close to the rectum (back passage) through which it can be closely felt and examined for its size. The function of the prostate is to make some of the fluid used to carry sperm.

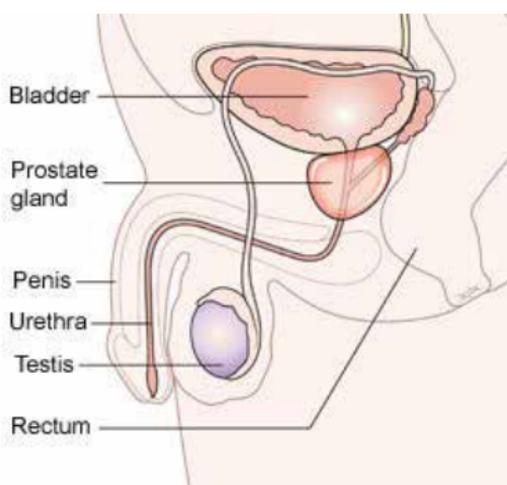


Diagram showing the position of the prostate and rectum.
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Risks and causes of prostate cancer

The cause of the majority of prostate cancers is unknown. However, the risk of developing prostate cancer may be slightly increased with the following:

- Increasing age - Prostate cancer is more common in men over the age of 50
- Family history - If your father or brother is diagnosed with prostate cancer you are two to three times more likely to get prostate cancer yourself. If they had it at a young age your risk is greater still.
- Diet - the “Western diet,” which is rich in fats and low in
- Race - African-American and African-Caribbean men are more at risk than other ethnic groups.

What to look out for

Early prostate cancer is often present without any obvious symptoms. However, if you have any of the symptoms listed below, make an appointment with your doctor.

- Dysuria – difficulty and pain passing urine (peeing)
- Urgency- difficult to postpone passing urine
- Frequency- going to the toilet more frequently than before
- Nocturia- getting up more than twice a night to pass urine
- Hesitancy- taking time to get going when passing urine
- Flow- has become weak or intermittent
- Incomplete emptying - feeling that the bladder has not emptied
- Blood-present in the urine (pee)

Less common symptoms include:

- Trouble having or keeping an erection
- Lower back pain or pain in hips or upper thighs.

It is important to note that the prostate enlarges with age. It wraps around the urethra and this enlargement (benign prostatic hyperplasia - BPH) can cause bladder outlet obstruction which can lead to the above symptoms. BPH is more common than prostate cancer but the conditions may exist together. BPH is not cancerous but can be troublesome.

What to do

- Please make an appointment with your GP. He or she will determine the severity of your symptoms and examine your prostate gland. Examination involves a digital rectal examination (DRE) where the prostate is examined and felt by the doctor by using a finger in the back passage. The examination itself will be quick and painless, and will assess the size, texture and consistency of the gland and look for any irregularities.
- Thanks to early detection and advances in treatment, there are over 26,000 prostate cancer survivors in Ireland today. Over 90% of men diagnosed with the disease will survive.

How prostate cancer is diagnosed

Tests and investigations to diagnose prostate cancer include digital rectal examination and blood tests (PSA) by your GP which will be repeated again if you are referred to a urologist (specialist doctor). A rectal scan (transrectal ultrasound) and a biopsy of the prostate may be necessary.

The PSA blood test explained

PSA is prostate specific antigen, a substance produced by the prostate sometimes but not always in higher quantities in men with prostate cancer. Other causes of a raised PSA blood test include benign prostatic hyperplasia in men with a large prostate gland and infection or inflammation in the prostate (prostatitis). You may have an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Image) scan before or after a biopsy.

A raised PSA blood test does not mean that you have prostate cancer but that you may have an increased risk of developing the disease. If the PSA is raised, your doctor will talk to you about your options. Men in Ireland are not routinely offered PSA tests to screen for prostate cancer. There are many reasons for this, the most relevant being that although the PSA is prostate specific, it is not cancer specific. In other words the PSA can be raised for reasons other than cancer.

Treatment for prostate cancer

Prostate cancer treatment will depend on:

- The type of cancer cells found at the time of diagnosis
- The test results
- The age of the patient
- General health of the patient

Some of the treatment options include: active surveillance (doing regular PSA blood tests and digital rectal examinations), surgery, radiotherapy (external beam or brachytherapy), hormone therapy and chemotherapy. Your doctor will discuss your treatment options with you. Some of these treatments may be used alone or together to treat some prostate cancers. It is often useful to have a friend or relative with you when the treatment is explained. Some patients find it helps to write down a list of questions before going to the appointment.

You can read stories of 15 Irish prostate cancer survivors at www.mariekeating.ie/heroes-of-hope.

How can I reduce the risk of getting prostate cancer

You may help to reduce your risk and look after your health generally by:

- Maintaining a healthy weight by combining a balanced, low fat diet with reducing red meat intake to two portions per week
- Doing regular exercise – Try to do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five times or more a week. The more active you are, the more you can reduce the risk.

For further information,
visit www.mariekeating.ie/get-men-talking

About the Marie Keating Foundation

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998, the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to cancer. The Marie Keating Foundation helps men and women prevent cancer, detect it at its earliest stages and journey through cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship.

Through its community information service, the Foundation's nurses have advised over 230,000 people on the causes and risk factors of cancer. The Foundation offers national awareness and education programmes covering the most common cancers affecting people in Ireland, including bowel, breast, lung, prostate and skin cancer.

Through its Comfort Fund, the Marie Keating Foundation provides financial assistance to people who are receiving treatment for any kind of cancer and who find themselves in financial difficulty as a result. In 2016 alone, over 525 families received assistance from the Comfort Fund.

The Marie Keating Foundation supports cancer survivors through its Survive & Thrive programmes which are run nationwide, free of charge, for men and women who have finished their cancer treatment. Over 600 cancer survivors have attended courses and seminars since 2015.

On 2 February 1998, our mother Marie died from cancer. We started this Foundation with the aim of making cancer less frightening by enlightening. We also hope that other families will not have to go through what we did and to ensure that such a wonderful person did not die in vain.

Take care,



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