



## PROSTATE CANCER

is the most common cancer in men in the UK, with over 40,000 new cases diagnosed every year.

The chance of developing the condition increases with age and most cases develop in men aged 50 or older. Men who have first degree male relatives (such as a father or brother) affected by prostate cancer have a slightly increased risk.

Prostate cancer develops slowly so for many years there may be no symptoms— in most cases symptoms will only start to develop when the cancer has grown large enough to put pressure on the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder). Symptoms, when they do appear, may include -

- ◆ the need to urinate more frequently, especially during the night
- ◆ a sudden urge to rush to the loo
- ◆ difficulty in starting to urinate
- ◆ straining or taking a long time while urinating
- ◆ weak flow
- ◆ feeling that the bladder has not emptied fully
- ◆ back, hip or pelvis pain
- ◆ blood in the urine or semen
- ◆ unexplained weight loss



Having these symptoms does not necessarily mean that you have prostate cancer— the symptoms can also relate to other conditions such as diabetes, bladder infections, some medicines and, most notably, benign prostatic enlargement (BPE), a non-cancerous condition very common in older men. So, if you have any of the above symptoms, **it is important to get yourself checked out by a doctor to find out what's causing the problem.** (If you would prefer to see a male doctor, please tell Reception when you make the appointment.)

You might not have any of the above symptoms but have a friend who does—and ladies, a man in your life might be choosing to ignore his symptoms. Whoever it is, encourage him to see his doctor especially if he is over 50.

Unfortunately, there is no single, definitive test for prostate cancer, but your doctor will most probably examine your prostate (a digital rectal examination) and arrange for a blood test to check your PSA (prostate-specific antigen) - where appropriate your doctor might also arrange for a biopsy or an MRI scan.

Prostate Cancer UK have an excellent website [www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org) which gives detailed information on all aspects of the condition and offers help and support to men, their partners and their families .

## WASTED MEDICINES WASTE MONEY



**A** report by the Department of Health estimates that unused medicines cost the NHS around £300 million each year – that is £300 million a year that could otherwise be used

to fund things such as more community nurses, more hip and knee replacements, and more drug treatment courses for cancer, dementia and other life-changing conditions.

Audits have shown that around half of all the medication returned to pharmacists has not been opened indicating that people are ordering medication they don't even start to use. And this doesn't include all the unused medicines that are not returned to pharmacists. It is worth bearing in mind that once a medicine has left the pharmacy, even if the packet has not been opened, it cannot be recycled or issued to anyone else.

**We can all help to reduce the problem of wasted medicines, simply by being sensible –**

- ◆ Check what medicines you still have at home before re-ordering— if you don't need the medicine please don't order it. **Make sure you tick only the appropriate box(es) for the medicines you need on the repeat prescription form** and do not automatically tick them all or leave all of them blank. If your pharmacist has an automatic reordering system and you are receiving medicines you didn't order or don't need please let us know.
- ◆ Don't stockpile medicines. This is a dangerous practice – some medicines have a very short shelf-life and can either become ineffective or change chemically leading to further health problems if taken after the use-by date.
- ◆ Make sure you understand exactly how to take a prescribed medicine and follow the instructions – if in doubt, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- ◆ Let your doctor know if, for whatever reason, you have stopped taking a medicine that has been prescribed for you. It's difficult to believe but there have been cases of people continuing to order medicines they have decided not to take!

## STAFF NEWS

Dr Eloise Elphinstone is due to return from Maternity Leave in August. We are delighted to announce that Dr Emily Challoner, who was employed to cover Dr Elphinstone's absence, will be staying with the practice permanently, working on Wednesdays and Fridays each week.

## AVOID SCAMS AND THE STRESS AND ANXIETY THEY CAUSE

Scams are schemes to con you out of your money. They can arrive by post, by phone, text message, email or be perpetrated by strangers on your doorstep, at cashpoint machines, on the pavement or, indeed, anywhere.

Scams cause untold misery, stress and anxiety and we are all vulnerable as the scammers get more and more sophisticated. It is of course impossible to outline every scam in detail but there are just a few basic rules which should help protect you.

1 Be alert to the fact that scams exist. When dealing with uninvited contacts from people or businesses, whether it's over the phone, by post, email, in person or on a social networking site, always consider the possibility that the approach may be a scam. Remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.

2 Never, ever divulge your bank or credit card details to anyone you don't know or trust and never share personally identifiable information with someone you have not invited to contact you. Be especially aware of telephone calls from people claiming to be from the police, a bank or credit card company who ask for your details to prevent fraud.

3 Do not respond to unsolicited emails asking for money or your bank details on whatever pretext.

4 Think carefully before clicking on any links in emails from people you don't know - if in doubt, don't.

5 Take care and stay alert at cashpoint machines— cover your hand as you enter your PIN—do not allow other people to distract you—if you are in the least unhappy do not use the machine.

6 Do not write down your PIN (if you really can't remember it, disguise it as a telephone number in a list of genuine telephone numbers).

7 Do not be taken in by strangers arriving on your doorstep offering to mend your roof, tarmac your drive, etc. If you need a job doing rely on recommendations or on tradesmen and service providers vetted by organisations such as Checkatrade.

9 Do not buy online unless you know and trust the website.

10 Be very careful regarding the information you enter on social networking and online dating sites.

Richmond Police have made some videos about scams that have been happening locally and how to keep an eye out for them. You can see them on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJsPo\\_YzI7M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJsPo_YzI7M) (or go to YouTube and search for Richmond Police Scams)