

What men should know about cancer



You are important. Your health is important.
Caring about your family means caring about your own health too.

Have you ever thought this, said it or heard it?

“I don’t like to go to the doctor. I never get sick, so why would I?”

“I don’t want somebody telling me not to smoke or drink.”

“I don’t want someone handling my privates or doing a rectal exam.”

Many men feel this way. Trouble is, cancer doesn’t care how you feel. Knowing the types of cancers men can get and learning to identify the early signs of cancer can cut down the risk of getting cancer.

Prostate cancer

This is most common in men 60–90.

Prostate cancer is cancer that starts in the prostate gland. This is a small gland found only in men. It wraps around the urethra—the tube that carries wee from the bladder to the penis.

Early prostate cancer does not usually cause symptoms. Later symptoms include needing to pee more often, difficulty starting to pee, a slow stream or one that starts and stops or leaking or dribbling afterwards.

How to find it early

There is no simple test to find prostate cancer early. Talk to your doctor about tests you could have.

Bowel cancer

This cancer is most common in men over 50.

Sometimes bowel cancer has no signs. Signs you may notice include:

- seeing blood in your goona
- being blocked up (constipation)
- having the runs (diarrhoea) for longer than two weeks.

If you have any of these signs, talk to your doctor or clinic.

How to find it early

You can use a bowel cancer screening kit at home. This quick and easy test looks for tiny amounts of blood in your goona. It’s called a faecal occult blood test (FOBT), and it’s part of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

If you are aged 50–74, you will probably get a free kit in the mail or your clinic nurse/doctor will give you the kit. After you do the test, you send the kit back using the envelope provided. The results will be sent to you and your doctor within two weeks.

Lung and mouth cancer

Many people know that smoking causes lung cancer, but they may not know that tobacco can lead to mouth cancer.

How to find it early

These types of cancer can be hard to spot early. If you have any of the signs below, talk to your doctor or clinic.

Signs of lung cancer—a cough that doesn’t go away, coughing up blood

Signs of mouth cancer—sores in the mouth that don’t go away, white or red areas in your mouth, difficulty swallowing or pain in the mouth.

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Testicular cancer

This is the most common cancer in men 15–45 years.

If testicular cancer is found early, a cure is highly likely. Waiting makes it harder to cure the cancer.

How to find it early

Check your testicles every month for any of the following signs:

- a hard, painless pea-size lump on the front or side of the testicle
- a bigger than usual testicle
- a heavy feeling or dull ache in the groin
- an unusual difference between one testicle and the other.

If you have any of these signs, talk to your doctor or clinic.

Bladder cancer

This is most common in men 60–90. Smoking is the main cause of bladder cancer.

How to find it early

Needing to pee often and finding blood in your pee are signs of bladder cancer. If you have any of these signs, talk to your doctor or clinic.

Breast cancer

Men can get breast cancer too, although it is rare.

How to find it early

Talk to your doctor if there are any changes in your breast or nipple such as sores, swelling, lumps or discharge.

7 warning signs of cancer

- Change in bowel or bladder habits.
- A sore that doesn't seem to be getting better.
- Blood in pee or goona.
- Any lump in the scrotum or breast.
- Trouble swallowing or feeling full after eating a small amount of food.
- A change in the colour, size or shape of a mole.
- A cough that doesn't go away or change in voice

These signs do not mean you have cancer, but there are some changes happening in your body.

If you have any of these signs for more than a few weeks, you should see your doctor or clinic as soon as possible.

For more information

- Call **Cancer Council 13 11 20**, visit cancersa.org.au
- Visit menzies.edu.au/cancer
- For current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer-related statistics, visit aihw.gov.au

This information has been adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by Menzies School of Health Research in consultation with a Clinical Advisory Group and an Indigenous Consultation Group. Production by Cancer Council.