

## Fact Sheet

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### PROSTATE CANCER

#### Queensland<sup>1,2</sup>

- ✦ 3,876 Queenslanders were diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2008, making it the most commonly occurring cancer in men (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer). Prostate cancer made up 29 per cent of all male cancers.
- ✦ 587 men died from prostate cancer in 2008 making it the second most common cause of male cancer deaths after lung cancer.
- ✦ Prostate cancer was responsible for 13 per cent of all male cancer deaths.
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk of a Queensland male to be diagnosed with prostate cancer before the age of 85 is one in five.
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk for a Queensland male to die of prostate cancer before the age of 85 is one in 21.
- ✦ In 2008, 71 per cent of all prostate cancer deaths occurred after age 74 years.
- ✦ Compared to the general population, 89.7 per cent of males diagnosed with prostate cancer will survive for at least five years.

#### Australia<sup>3</sup>

- ✦ Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in Australian men (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer).
- ✦ After lung cancer, prostate cancer causes more deaths among Australian men than any other kind of cancer.
- ✦ Prostate cancer is rare before the age of 45.
- ✦ Almost 90 per cent of prostate cancers occur in men aged 60 years and over, and 97 per cent of deaths from prostate cancer occur in men aged 60 years or over.
- ✦ After diagnosis, a majority of men survive for 10 years or more.

#### Detection and symptoms<sup>4</sup>

- ✦ The most common tests for prostate cancer are the PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood test, rectal examination and biopsy. Prostate screening approaches are still being investigated.
- ✦ The PSA test does not indicate with complete certainty that a person does or does not have prostate cancer – only one in three men with a higher than expected result are found to have prostate cancer. However it does guide the decision about whether further tests could be beneficial.
- ✦ A biopsy is the only definitive way of telling whether you have prostate cancer.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Cancer Registry 2011, *Cancer in Queensland, Incidence, Mortality, Survival and Prevalence 1982-2008*. Brisbane: Cancer Council Queensland, Queensland Health and QCR.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Cancer Statistics On-Line, 2011. Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Cancer Council Queensland ([www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol](http://www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol)). Based on data released by the Queensland Cancer Registry (1982-2008; released November 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Australasian Association of Cancer Registries. 2008. *Cancer in Australia: an overview 2008*, Cancer Series no. 46. Cat. no. CAN 42, AIHW, Canberra.

<sup>4</sup> Baade PD, Steginga SK, Aitken JF. Current Status of prostate cancer in Queensland: 1982 to 2002. Brisbane, Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Queensland Cancer Fund. 2005.

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- \* Unfortunately there is not yet a test available that is very good at differentiating between aggressive cancers and those which could be left alone. That's why it's important for men who are thinking about being tested to be fully aware of the pros and cons of testing, and to make a decision they are comfortable with on that basis.
- \* Men with a family history of prostate cancer may have increased risk themselves of developing prostate cancer. They are advised to see their doctor for ongoing management on a yearly basis beginning in their 40s.<sup>5</sup>
- \* In the early stages, prostate cancer does not usually produce any symptoms. Symptoms are caused by the prostate growing and causing the urethra to narrow.
- \* Men with symptoms suggestive of prostate disease are advised to see their doctor. In most cases the problems are due to benign (non-cancerous) enlargement of the prostate gland, but can also be due to cancer. Symptoms include:
  - Difficulty in passing urine or weak flow;
  - Passing urine more frequently than usual, especially at night;
  - Difficulty in starting the flow of urine;
  - Blood in urine;
  - Pain when passing urine; and
  - Any of the above symptoms combined with pain in the lower back, upper thighs or pelvic area.
- \* Most prostate cancers are slow growing, generally occur in men over 50 years and often do not shorten life. A man may have prostate cancer without it causing him any physical problems.<sup>6</sup>

### General information

- \* The prostate is a small gland, which is part of the male reproductive system. It produces a fluid that protects and enriches sperm. The prostate is about the size of a walnut and is located below the bladder. It is shaped like a doughnut, and through the hole in the centre of the prostate passes the urethra, the tube that empties urine from the bladder through the penis<sup>7</sup>.
- \* Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the prostate keep growing when they don't need to.
- \* Only men can get prostate cancer because only men have a prostate.
- \* Men with any symptoms should see their doctor.

For more information about prostate cancer, please call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

**Disclaimer:** The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for advice from a properly qualified medical professional who can advise you about your own individual medical needs. It is not intended to constitute medical advice and is provided for general information purposes only. Information on cancer, including the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer, is constantly being updated and revised by medical professionals and the research community.

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<sup>5</sup> Queensland Cancer Fund 2004, *Understanding Treatment for Advanced Prostate Cancer* [brochure], Queensland Cancer Fund.

<sup>6</sup> The Cancer Council NSW 2006. Retrieved November 2006, from [www.mydr.com.au](http://www.mydr.com.au).

<sup>7</sup> The Cancer Council Queensland. Finding prostate cancer early. Retrieved February 2009, from: <http://www.cancerqld.org.au/pdf/Findingprostatecancerearly.pdf>

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