

MEDIA RELEASE



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More get prostate cancer but help's at hand

More Tasmanian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer than ever before, according to new figures.

Cancer Council Tasmania Clinical Liaison Consultant Dr Rob Brodribb says a jump in prostate cancer numbers reported by the Menzies Research Institute shows that testing is leading to more diagnoses but that the number of deaths remains relatively constant.

Now Tasmanians confronting or concerned about prostate cancer can dial an expert for personal advice.

On September 11, a panel of cancer experts will answer questions from men, their families and friends on the Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20 between 6pm and 9pm for the cost of a local call.

"With prostate cancer, it is vital that people are fully informed before taking any action on screening or treatment," Dr Brodribb says.

"The Call-in gives men a chance to call from the privacy of their homes and have their questions answered by prostate cancer experts. It is especially valuable for rural and regional Tasmanians who can access specialists unavailable in their local area," he says.

The confidential Prostate Cancer Call-In is organised each year by the Cancer Council and the Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Tasmanian men with around 485 diagnosed and 62 dying of the disease each year.

"Men must take prostate cancer seriously even though many of its symptoms are the same as those for a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, and are most likely not life-threatening," Dr Brodribb says.

In its early stages, prostate cancer rarely has symptoms. However, men experiencing any of the following should contact a doctor promptly: difficulty passing urine; a slow, interrupted flow of urine; frequent passing of urine; blood in urine; pain during urination; recent onset of back or pelvic pain associated with urinary problems.

**For comment call Dr Rob Brodribb on 0408 127 499
Ends**

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Prostate cancer survivors for interview:

John Dowsett: Hobart prostate cancer survivor

Norton Harvey: Launceston prostate cancer survivor

Dr Frank Madill: Launceston GP, prostate cancer survivor and panellist

To contact the above call Frank Noakes on 0417 064 417

Prostate cancer fast facts:

- The prostate is a small gland about the size of a walnut found only in men. It sits just below the bladder and surrounds the urethra.
- Less than 1% of prostate cancers occur in men aged under 45 years, 14% in men aged 45-59 years and 86% in men aged 60 years and over.
- 62 Tasmanian men died from prostate cancer in 2005 (latest figures) compared with 85 from bowel cancer and 151 from lung cancer.
- 97% of deaths from prostate cancer occur in men aged 60 years or over.
- The cause of prostate cancer is not known. Getting older is the most significant risk factor. Men with a family history of prostate cancer are at higher risk of getting the disease.
- Early prostate cancer usually does not have symptoms. Symptoms that may occur later – such as problems urinating, and blood in the urine – are indistinguishable from those of the more common, non-cancerous condition prostate enlargement, which is normally treatable.
- Tests are available that can help detect possible signs of prostate cancer. Men should talk to their doctor about the benefits, risks and uncertainties of testing, as well as treatment options and side effects, before deciding whether to be tested.

*Statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australasian Association of Cancer Registries publication *Cancer in Australia 2001* (latest national statistics available), and the Tasmanian Cancer Registry publication *Cancer in Tasmania: Incidence and Mortality 2005*.

Support for Tasmanian men with prostate cancer

The Cancer Council Tasmania offers a range of support services for men diagnosed with prostate cancer, including:

- Prostate support groups in Hobart, Launceston and Ulverstone where men and their partners and carers can meet and share experiences with others affected by the disease.
- Cancer Support Centres in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport that provide practical and emotional support to men with prostate cancer and their families.
- Cancer Connect, a peer support program that connects a person in need of support with a trained person who has been through a similar experience.