

Men and cancer.



13 11 20
Cancer Council

 **Cancer
Council**
WA

“What I’ve seen too many men do is wait until they get cancer before they start to do the right thing”

How many men get cancer?

Even though less than half of the Australian population are men, more men than women are diagnosed with cancer each year.

Table 1: Estimated cancer in Australia in 2021

	Men	Women	Men and women combined
Number of cancer diagnoses in 2021	80,371	70,411	150,782
Diagnoses per 100,000 people	537	444	486
Number of cancer deaths in 2021	27,600	21,621	49,221
Deaths per 100,000 people	182	122	149

Source: AIHW, 2021

In 2017 there were 7379 Western Australian (WA) men diagnosed with cancer and 2323 who died from cancer.

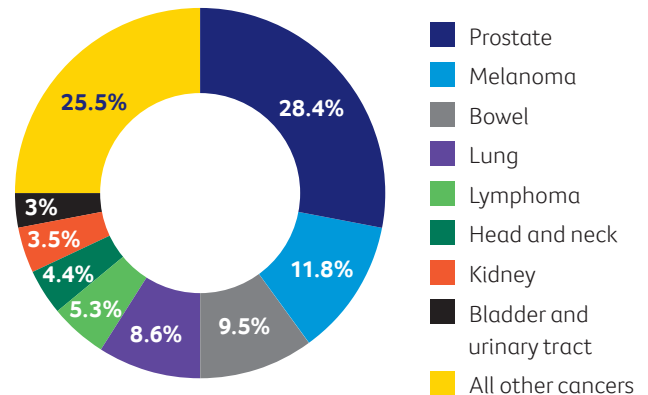


Cancers that affect men

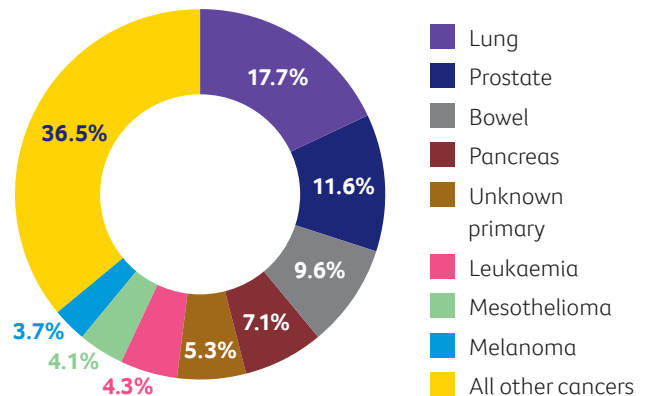
Although prostate cancer and testicular cancer only occur in men, they are not the only cancers that affect men. This brochure looks at the most common cancers to affect Western Australian men including skin, lung, bowel, prostate, and testicular cancers. Together these make up three out of every five cancers diagnosed in men. Some cancers can be prevented, so keep reading to find out how.

Figure 1: New cancer cases and cancer deaths in Western Australian men, 2017

New cases, 2017



Deaths, 2017



Source: Western Australia Cancer Registry, 2020

Skin cancer

Skin cancer is by far the most common cancer type in Western Australian men. Non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) makes up most of these cases. In 2014, there were more than 55,000 paid Medicare services for skin cancer treatments in men in WA. In 2019 in WA, 921 men were diagnosed with melanoma, the most dangerous type of skin cancer.

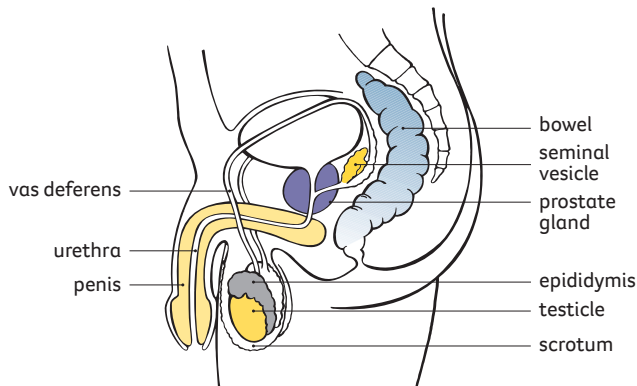
Skin cancer is more common in men, and more men than women die from skin cancer. The good news is that skin cancer is almost totally preventable, and when found early can often be very successfully treated.

Prostate cancer

In 2017 in WA, 2093 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer, making it the second most common cancer in Western Australian men (after NMSC). We're still not sure what causes prostate cancer, but we know some factors that increase the risk include:

- aging
- having a father or brother who had prostate cancer
- genetic mutations in BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes
- having Lynch Syndrome

Male reproductive system



Bowel cancer

Bowel cancer was diagnosed in 702 men in WA in 2017. We know a lot about preventing bowel cancer and a lot about finding bowel cancer early, yet it still makes up nearly 10 per cent of all cancer deaths in Western Australian men. Maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, eating well, avoiding alcohol and quitting smoking are all things men can do to reduce their risk of bowel cancer.

Participating in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program if you're between 50 and 74 years of age can find bowel cancer early or even before it develops, which greatly increases your chances of successful treatment.



Lung cancer

Despite being a largely preventable disease, lung cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers and the leading cause of cancer deaths. In WA in 2017, 637 men were diagnosed with lung cancer and 411 died from the disease.

Exposure to occupational and environmental carcinogens such as silica dust, diesel engine exhaust or asbestos can cause lung cancer but more than 80 per cent of lung cancers in Australian men are caused by tobacco smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke.

Testicular cancer

Testicular cancer is not a common cancer, making up about 1.2 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in men in WA in 2017.

Unlike other cancers, most cases of testicular cancer are in young men between 15 and 39 years of age. It is not known what causes testicular cancer. Having an undescended testicle, previous testicular cancer, or a family history increases a man's risk. Importantly, young men need to know and respond to the symptoms of testicular cancer. The good news is that testicular cancer is very treatable and the chance of surviving at least five years after diagnosis is 97 per cent.



What you can do to reduce your risk

Stop smoking

Tobacco smoking causes 16 different types of cancer, and is the most common cause of cancer overall. It is responsible for almost one in every five cancer deaths. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7000 chemicals, including 69 chemicals known to cause cancer (carcinogens).

Quitting smoking has major and immediate benefits at any age, and smokers don't have to do it alone!

Talk to your doctor, call the **Quitline 13 7848** for confidential counselling, or for more information and resources to help you quit, visit **makesmokinghistory.org.au**



Avoid or limit alcohol

A lot more men than women drink at risky levels. Drinking alcohol increases the risk of many different types of cancer including mouth, liver and bowel cancers. When it comes to cancer risk, there is no safe level of alcohol consumption. Even small amounts of alcohol increase your risk of cancer. The more you drink and the more often you drink, the greater your risk.

If you do drink, drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than four standard drinks on any one day to reduce the risk of cancer and other long-term harms of alcohol. One standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol. In Australia, packaged alcoholic drinks are required to state the number of standard drinks on the label.



100mL

(one glass of wine)



285mL

(one middy of full strength beer)



30mL

(one nip of spirits)



375mL

(one can of mid-strength beer)



250mL

(one can of full-strength pre-mix spirits)

Alcohol also contains a lot of energy (kilojoules or calories), similar to the amount in soft drink, and can contribute to weight gain.

The combined effect on cancer risk of smoking and drinking alcohol is much greater than the individual risks from either smoking or drinking alcohol alone.

Be SunSmart

Skin cancer is mainly caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation, so it's simple to lower your risk by avoiding overexposure to the sun.

Remember to be SunSmart when the UV Index is 3 or above, by using a combination of these five simple steps:



SLIP on sun protective clothing.



SLOP on SPF 30 or higher, broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.



SLAP on a sun protective hat.



SEEK shade.



SLIDE on close fitting, wraparound sunglasses.



Move your body

Physical activity is great for health, and yet less than half of men do enough to get the benefits. Being active can help us:

- build fitness, balance and flexibility
- maintain bone and muscle health
- improve mental health and mood
- sleep better
- manage weight
- reduce the risk of chronic diseases including some cancers



Move more: Do at least some physical activity each week no matter your age, weight, ability or health. Include activities that incorporate fitness, strength, balance and flexibility.

Move harder: Each week aim for *two hours 30 minutes to five hours* of moderate-intensity activity or *one hour 15 minutes to two hours 30 minutes* of vigorous-intensity activity; or an equivalent combination of both.

Move stronger: Do strength exercises on at least two days each week. This can be lifting weights, but also includes body weight exercises like yoga, pilates, squats, pushups etc.

Move often: Sit less and regularly break up long periods of sitting.

Stay in shape

Being above a healthy body weight is associated with an increased risk of 13 different cancers, including bowel, kidney and liver cancers.

Body weight can be assessed using the body mass index (BMI) or waist circumference. Waist circumference is important as it tells us how much 'visceral fat' is around our waist and internal organs. This kind of fat is worse for our health than fat that is just under the skin.

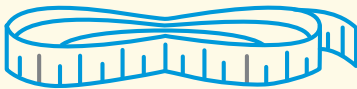
Neither method is perfect but they can be used together to predict our health risks. Use the formula below or an online BMI calculator like the one at livelighter.com.au/bmicalculator

BMI =

$$\frac{\text{weight (kg)}}{\text{height x height (metres)}}$$

BMI	Category
< 18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 25	Healthy weight
25 - 30	Overweight
30 +	Obese

MEN



94cm

Increased risk

102cm

Greatly increased risk

Eating well and being active can help us to stop gaining weight, maintain a healthy weight or lose weight to reduce our risk of cancer.

These actions are great for health and will reduce our cancer risk regardless of our weight.

Eat for health

While it is the overall pattern of eating that is key, rather than any specific foods, the research shows that **what we eat influences our cancer risk**. For the lowest risk, follow these guidelines:

- **Enjoy plenty of plant foods.** This includes vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts and seeds. Fresh, frozen, dried and canned are all great options.
- **Choose wholegrain** cereal products to get more fibre in your diet and reduce the risk of bowel cancer. These are foods like brown rice, grainy bread, oats, wholemeal pasta, barley and quinoa.
- **Eat processed meat very sparingly** and limit red meat to 500 grams per week by including some seafood, chicken, egg, tofu and legume-based meals each week.



- **Choose nourishing foods and avoid junk foods.** Junk food and drinks are high in sugar, saturated fat and/or salt and don't give us any of the good things our bodies need to function well and prevent disease. A diet high in junk food can also lead to weight gain and being above a healthy weight - another risk factor for cancer.

Finding cancer early

Bowel cancer

When found early, bowel cancer treatment can be very successful. If you are aged between 50 and 74 years you should participate in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP). Eligible people are screened every two years using an immunochemical faecal occult blood test (iFOBT) to detect small traces of blood in your poo. If you receive a positive iFOBT result you will be referred to a specialist for more tests for bowel cancer. People who are not eligible for the NBCSP should discuss their bowel cancer risk and options for screening with their doctor.

Skin cancer

Being familiar with your own skin increases your chance of finding skin cancer at an early and highly treatable stage. You can and should check your whole body yourself, not just areas normally exposed to the sun. Get someone to check the parts of your body that you cannot see. If you find a new spot on your skin, one that has changed in size, shape or colour or a non-healing sore, see your doctor as soon as you can.

Prostate cancer

There is no national screening program for prostate cancer. At the moment the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test is not a suitable test to use on men with no symptoms of prostate disease. When the benefits and harms of screening for prostate cancer by PSA testing are weighed up, there is no clear, overall benefit of screening for the patient.

PSA is a protein produced by the prostate. If the prostate becomes enlarged or damaged, PSA can

be detected in the blood. A high PSA level can be a sign of cancer, but PSA can also be raised in other prostate conditions.

Some men may still choose to have a PSA test. Talk to your doctor if:

- you are over 50 and concerned about prostate cancer
- you think you are at a higher than average risk of developing prostate cancer

It's important for your doctor to talk to you about your risk factors; age, symptoms, family history and the impact of a prostate cancer diagnosis on your quality of life before you decide to have a PSA test for prostate cancer.

It is very common for men over 50 years of age to experience symptoms related to changes in urinary flow, urgency or control. In most cases these symptoms are caused by non-cancerous, enlargement of the prostate. They should be checked by a doctor.

Testicular cancer

There is no national screening program for testicular cancer. It's important for young men who notice something unusual in either testicle or their scrotum to have it checked by a doctor immediately. Don't wait and see. Symptoms that need to be checked include:

- a painless lump
- swelling pain or ache
- pain in the abdomen
- noticing a sudden fluid build-up in the scrotum

ONE IN THREE CANCERS CAN BE PREVENTED.



Make smoking history

- Plan and prepare to quit and stay quit.



Be SunSmart

- Protect your skin when the UV is 3 or above.



Eat more plants

- Include plenty of vegetables, legumes, fruit, wholegrains, nuts and seeds.



Be active

- Sit less and move more every day.



Avoid alcohol

- Have alcohol-free days and swap to low- or no-alcohol drinks.



Avoid excess weight gain

- Eat well and be physically active.



Make time for your health

- Participate in screening and vaccination programs.
- Visit a health care professional if you notice a change in your body.



For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, speak to a cancer nurse on **13 11 20**. Calls are confidential and available statewide Monday to Friday during business hours. Local call costs apply, except for mobiles.