



**UROLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA
AND NEW ZEALAND**

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USANZ urging men under 50 to know their prostate cancer risk

The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) is issuing a warning to men under 50 to know their prostate cancer risk, ahead of new guidelines being released for the Early Detection of Prostate Cancer, with data showing a concerning increase and possible generational shift in the number of younger people being diagnosed with the disease.

The Australian cancer data show a 6.7 fold increase in the men aged 40-49 years diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2024 compared to 2000.

“Prostate cancer is a genetic time bomb and men need to know their family history because some men are up to seven times more likely to develop this type of cancer. Prostate cancer is traditionally associated with older age but that assumption could be deadly,” said USANZ President and Leading Urologist Professor Damien Bolton.

“What’s most concerning is that we don’t yet know why we are seeing an increase in younger men under 50 being diagnosed with prostate cancer, including with metastatic forms of the disease,” said Prof Bolton.

Statistics show while 1 in 5 Australian men and 1 in 8 in New Zealand will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, the risk is at least double the average for those with a father or brother with the cancer.

“If that man has two or more close relatives who have had prostate cancer then their risk increases up to 7 times the average,” said Prof Bolton.

“We also know that BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations for breast and ovarian cancers in a family can also dramatically increase a man’s risk of prostate cancer, but alarmingly, many men remain unaware they’re at risk,” he said.

September is prostate cancer awareness month and updated National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines for the Early Detection of Prostate Cancer in Australia are

due to be released including a recommendation for baseline PSA test for men who request it at age 40, as well as earlier and more frequent testing for men at higher risk, including those with a family history or of sub-Saharan ancestry, starting at age 40.

Prostate cancer is currently the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia. Each year more than 26,000 Australian men are diagnosed and nearly 4,000 will die from the disease.

In New Zealand, there are around 4,000 new cases each year, claiming 700 lives, with Māori men 72 per cent more likely to die of prostate cancer after diagnosis than their non-Māori peers.

USANZ Genitourinary (GU) Oncology Special Advisory Group Leader Associate Professor Weranja Ranasinghe said prostate cancer was a silent epidemic robbing men of their lives unnecessarily.

“Detecting prostate cancer early gives the best chance of cure. If you are a man over 40 who has a family history then you need to get a baseline PSA test,” A/Prof Ranasinghe said.

“Not all prostate cancers need treatment, but having a PSA blood test and MRI can give peace of mind. These tests focus on finding significant cancers that matter.

“The reality is that most prostate cancers develop without any symptoms at all. So it is important to get checked .

"Early detection saves lives. A quick blood test could make all the difference between catching prostate cancer early, when it's most treatable, and not miss the chance for cure.

“This is about driving down mortality rates and giving men the best possible chance of surviving prostate cancer,” A/Prof Ranasinghe said.

About Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand

The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand is the peak professional body for urological surgeons in Australia and New Zealand. Urologists are surgeons who treat men, women and children with problems involving the kidney, bladder, prostate and male reproductive organs. These conditions include cancer, stones, infection, incontinence, urination difficulties, sexual dysfunction and pelvic floor problems. <https://www.usanz.org.au/>