

5. **Supporting Your Man in Looking after His Health A Guide for Women**



*“Everything I teach (Yoga and Life Coaching), everything I write about and any advice I give to people is based upon my personal experience and on what I do myself. I have taken a stand and declared that **my health is my responsibility.**”*

Sam Rao. Professional Yoga Teacher, LifeSuccess Coach with special interest in Health.

This is the fifth of five articles, available to download and study, in which we explore the issues around prostate cancer; how the prostate works; developing your own understanding; planning your protection strategy; and a woman’s guide to supporting her man in looking after his health.

What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is a disease of the prostate gland in a man’s reproductive system. It happens when cells of the prostate change and begin to multiply out of control.

About the size of a walnut, the prostate gland sits under the bladder and behind the pubic bone. The tube through which urine passes out is called the urethra, and it travels right through the middle of the prostate gland, starting at the bladder and exiting out through the penis.

The prostate gland produces almost 70% of the whitish fluid that makes up semen.

While women go for regular smear tests, mammograms and well-being clinics, men are often too embarrassed to discuss their problems and simply allow the early signs and symptoms of prostate cancer to go undetected.

How Would You Know if Your Man Has a Problem?

Ask him! Let him have the opportunity to discuss possible problems.

When men have problems urinating, it is usually caused by process called benign prostatic hyperplasia/hypertrophy (BPH), This is when the prostate gland begins to swell up and fills the confined space around it. As it swells, it puts pressure on the urethra and begins to restrict the flow.

- 25% of all men between the ages of 40 – 60 will suffer from some symptoms of BPH.
- 70% will have symptoms by the time they are 70
- 80% will have symptoms by the time they are 80
- In the UK, 78,000 new cases of BPH are diagnosed every year

Unfortunately, the symptoms for BPH and prostate cancer are very similar and it is easy for men to ignore the warning signs.

Symptoms include:

- Raised PSA levels
- trouble starting urination
- urinating much more frequently than usual
- the feeling that he can't release all of his urine
- pain on urination or ejaculation
- blood in the urine or semen
- impotence
- bone pain

All of these symptoms can be caused by a variety of things besides prostate cancer, so having them doesn't necessarily mean your partner has prostate cancer. If he is experiencing any of these symptoms, however, he needs to go to his doctor for an immediate examination and evaluation.

What are The Chances of Your Partner Getting Prostate Cancer?

Most countries, as a percentage of population, are recording the incidence of prostate cancer similar to the numbers in UK.

- In 2008, 43,000 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer
- Every day in the UK, one man dies every 40 minutes as a result of prostate cancer.
- That adds up to 13,000 men during 2008.
- These men's ages ranged from 35 to 75 years, so it is not just an old man's disease.

2009 estimates are higher and there is no real progress towards reducing this cancer.

Sadly, many men go past the point where life-saving treatment is effective. My goal is to increase understanding of this disease and how you can protect your partner against it.

Why Don't Men Take This Issue Seriously?

- Ignorance
- Embarrassment
- Fear of the consequences

Women need to accept that men are just not as used to as women are to taking care of their intimate areas. For years, women have accepted mammograms and cervical smear tests as part of a normal preventive medical routine.

Men need to be encouraged to develop a similar mind-set when it comes to prostate cancer.

The best time to develop knowledge and understanding is before there are any signs or symptoms. Out of embarrassment, many men adopt a 'head in the sand' attitude until things get really bad.

Removing ignorance means studying and gathering knowledge. Removing embarrassment maybe a bit difficult, depending upon the man, in which case I strongly recommend that you use a "terror" tactic to open up his mind to the possible repercussions. One of the terror tactics would be to say; "Do you want to go the way of 13,000 men who died during 2008 because of Prostate Cancer?" You could add even more drama by saying; "that's 1 man every 40 minutes, every day". These are the facts: use them effectively.

A third possibility is the fear of treatment of prostate cancer. There is a widely held belief that treatment usually involves radical surgery that will leave a man impotent. Modern surgical techniques can generally avoid this outcome, provided that the cancer is not too advanced, but the best way of avoiding surgery is not to develop prostate cancer in the first place!

What Can I Do to Encourage More Responsibility?

- 1) Make sure that articles One to Four are placed where they will be read and even discussed.
- 2) Book him an appointment with your GP for a blood test for PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen). Insist on seeing the numbers (Do **NOT** settle for a comment from GP saying "its normal" ask for the number.
- 3) Have a look at the results. Play UP the results if the numbers are below 4 ng/ml (this is the normal range). What better opportunity to ensure that he starts to do everything necessary to keep the numbers in normal range?

- 4) **If** the numbers are greater than 4, then there is work to do. A good GP will immediately ensure that there is a follow-up appointment with a urologist at the local hospital.
- 5) Be aware that this disease is no longer an old man's problem. The age range for serious prostate cancers is from age 30 onwards.

Be Aware of the Consequences

Any diagnosis of serious illness is devastating for the victim but equally has far-reaching effects on the person's family.

Where the illness has a poor prognosis, the effects are even more brutal. As in all cancers, the medical profession considers a procedure or a treatment to be a success if life is extended by 5 years. Unless your partner is already in his declining years, this is unlikely to be much comfort. If your partner is the main bread-winner then there are eventualities which need to be planned in advance.

This is why it is important for you to do everything you can to encourage and support your partner in taking his health seriously. Monitoring his PSA should be as much a part of his routine as regular cholesterol and blood pressure checks. Add in the correct nutritional balance and yoga exercises to encourage prostate health and your partner will be doing a lot to protect himself and his family from the negative effects of prostate cancer.



Where Can I Get More Information?

I want men and women to have information on prostate cancer *before* the problem appears. These articles are about taking action ahead of any changes in the prostate gland.

Useful websites

I have found the UK Cancer Charity website to be one of the most useful. In other countries, there are many other sites that may be more relevant for people reading this article in that country, including useful information on what individual health services do to help men with prostate cancer.

<http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk/>

other websites:

<http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk/cancertype/prostate>

<http://www.zerocancer.org>

My case study

I only ask people to do what I do. My own case study is an ongoing “project” and is updated as often as possible. You can download a copy to study and make it available to others. [Download:](#)

I am also writing a book which is planned for completion by June 2009 with a much more detailed plan of action. In the meantime, I urge you to download and study all the articles from my website, to gain all the information you need to help protect your man from prostate cancer and its effects on you and your relationships.

Make *your* health *your* responsibility.

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useful websites:

<http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk/>

<http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk/Cancertype/Prostate>

<http://www.samraoyoga.com/information-prostrate.php>

Information on supplements:

<http://www.shop.samraoyoga.com/index.php?cName=usana-nutritional-suppliments>