



Patient information

**Bilateral Orchidectomy for Prostate Cancer**

**Who is this information for?**

The tests that you have recently undergone show that your prostate cancer has spread outside of the prostate gland. This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about the treatment options open to you.

The choice about which treatment is best for you will be made together with your doctor. This will be based on the risks and benefits of the treatments and your individual circumstances.

**What are my options of treatment?**

Prostate cancer needs testosterone to grow. By stopping testosterone from reaching your tumour, your cancer can be controlled effectively. This can be done by an operation or by treatment with medicines; tablets or injections and is called 'hormone manipulation therapy' Your consultant will have explained the different treatment options available to you and what would happen if you decided not to have any treatment at all.

The treatment options open to you include;

- Surgical removal of the part of the testicles which produces testosterone called a bilateral or subcapsular orchidectomy.
- Tablets or injections of a hormone drug which reduces the testosterone level in your body.

Both options are equally effective. Information about hormone injections are contained in a separate leaflet which we would recommend that you also read entitled 'Information for patients receiving hormone injection therapy for prostate cancer' before you make your decision

**What is a bilateral or subcapsular orchidectomy?**

An orchidectomy is a simple operation. A small cut is made in the scrotum (the sac that holds the testicles), and the part of both testicles that produce the male hormone testosterone is removed. It can be performed under a local or general anaesthetic. You will probably have to stay in hospital overnight but you might be able to go home the same day.

**What are the benefits of having a bilateral orchidectomy?**

When the cancer has spread beyond the prostate to nearby glands or bones (metastasised), the most effective form of treatment is 'hormone manipulation therapy'. Having a bilateral orchidectomy is one way of achieving this permanently.

**Are there any risks or long term effects involved in having the operation?**

Yes, there are side effects to nearly all treatments. An orchidectomy cannot be reversed once it has.

been carried out. Therefore you must consider the following permanent side effects before consenting to this operation

### **Hot flushes and night sweats**

Is possibly the most common side effect and can occur quite soon after this operation and can be severe particularly for the first six months. There are some medicines and alternative practices which may reduce these effects if they become problematic.

### **Sexual side effects and Infertility**

Most methods of hormone therapies both surgical and with medicines can cause reduced or loss of libido (sexual desire), erection difficulties and make you infertile. If you have any concerns about any of these symptoms please discuss this with your consultant or nurse specialist. Treatments and sperm banking can be available.

### **Weight gain and Tiredness**

Reducing your testosterone levels can result in you putting on weight and feeling tired both physically and mentally. If this becomes a problem to you please discuss it with your doctor or specialist nurse

### **What can I expect before the operation?**

Your operation will be explained to you and you will be encouraged to ask any questions you may have. You will have some tests carried out to check that you are fit enough for surgery and be asked to give your written consent for your operation.

### **What will happen after the operation?**

You may feel some general discomfort and bruising to your scrotum in the week following surgery. We would encourage you to take the pain killer tablets that the hospital will send you home with. A scrotal support will be provided and we would recommend you wear this until the swelling has settled. Once the swelling from the operation has subsided, your scrotum will look different and will be reduced in size. Your stitches will dissolve but this may take several weeks, your wound will rarely need a dressing. **Please contact your GP if you notice any increased swelling, pain or leakage of fluid from your wound site;** This may mean that you have a wound infection that needs treating with antibiotics.

### **What can I do to help?**

We recommend that you;

- Avoid heavy lifting for two weeks following the operation.
- Avoid driving for two weeks and check with your insurer's that you are covered to drive.
- Keep the wound clean by showering or bathing daily.

### **Who can I talk to and get further help?**

Many people living with cancer may worry about what the future holds. Concerns about tests and treatments are common. It may help if you make a list of your concerns so that you can ask your consultant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment, please speak to your doctor, or contact the Clinical Nurse Specialist on telephone number 01782 553820. There is a 24 hour answer phone if you ring outside normal working hours

There is also a North Staffs Prostate Cancer Support Group which is open to anyone affected by prostate cancer. If you wish to speak to anyone receiving the same treatment this can be arranged for you either through the support group or your Clinical Nurse Specialist.

### Further Information

#### Macmillan cancer support and Information Centre

University Hospital of North Staffordshire

Open for drop in sessions: Monday – Thursday 10am until 12.30pm and 2pm until 4pm. Friday by appointment only.

Or telephone on 01782 554363 any time.  
(Answer phone available out of hours)

The **Patient Advice and Liaison Service** would be pleased to offer confidential advice and support if you have any concerns. PALS can be contacted on 01782 552814 or Email [patient.advice@uhns.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.advice@uhns.nhs.uk)



### Useful Contacts

The Prostate Cancer Charity  
Tel: 020 8222 7622 / 0845 300 8383  
Email: [info@prostate-cancer.org.uk](mailto:info@prostate-cancer.org.uk)

Prostate Cancer Support Association  
Tel: 0845 6010766

Cancer Research UK  
Tel: 020 7061 8355 / 0800 226 237  
Email: [cancer.info@cancer.org.uk](mailto:cancer.info@cancer.org.uk)

Bacup Cancer Information Service  
Tel: 020 7739 2280 / 0808 800 1234  
Email: [info@cancerbacup.org](mailto:info@cancerbacup.org)

Cancer Link Helpline  
Tel: 0808 800 0000

The Impotence Association Helpline  
Tel: 020 8767 7791