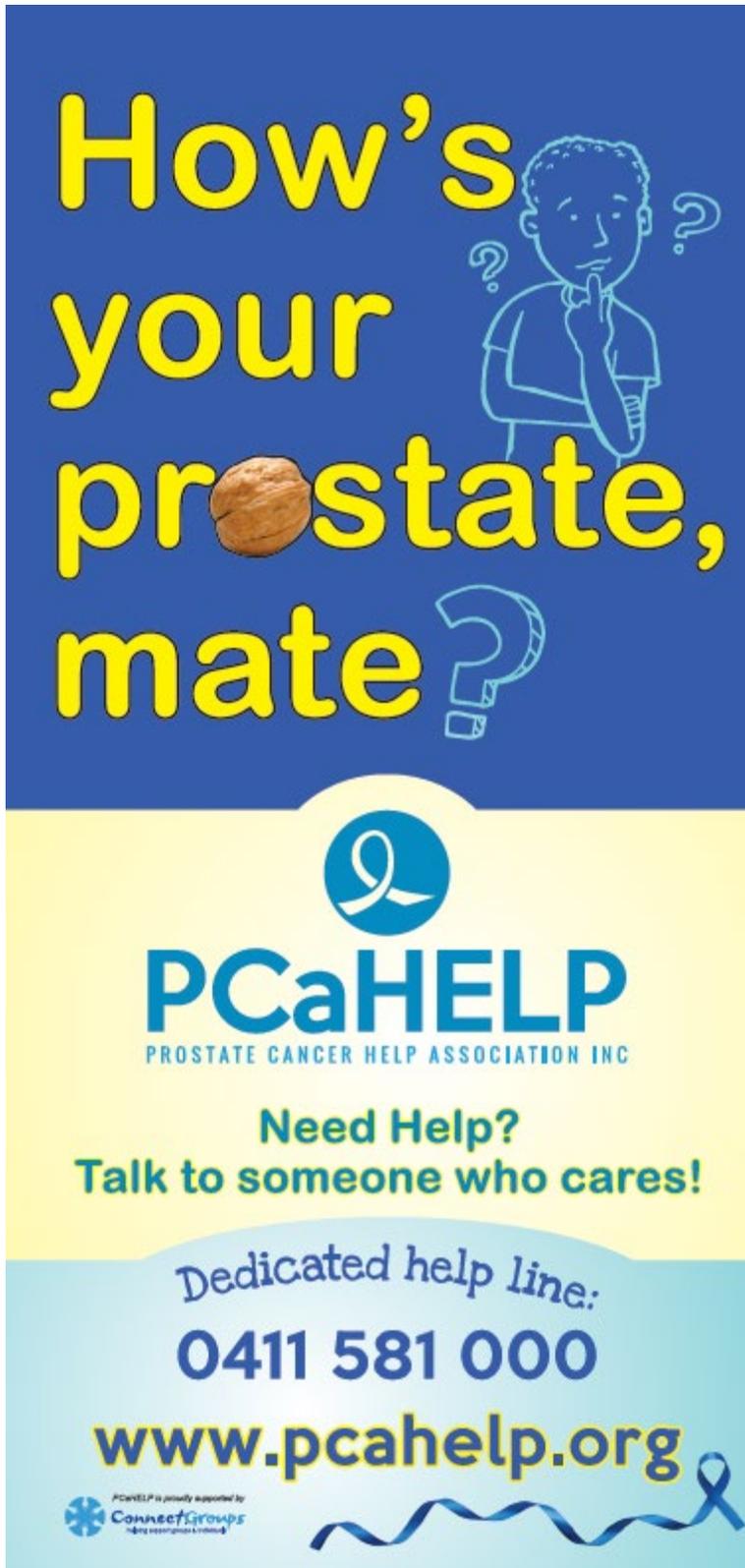


The Helpful Messenger

PCaHELP February 2026 Newsletter



**How's
your
prostate,
mate?**

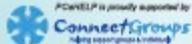





PCaHELP
PROSTATE CANCER HELP ASSOCIATION INC

**Need Help?
Talk to someone who cares!**

Dedicated help line:
0411 581 000
www.pcahelp.org


PCaHELP is proudly supported by
ConnectGroups
"Helping people help others"



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This newsletter is jam packed with information that we hope you find useful

If you would prefer to be removed from our mailing list please don't hesitate to email admin@pcahelp.org with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject line

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HELP SAVE OUR PROSTATE CANCER SPECIALIST NURSES

Most of us know of the incredible work our prostate cancer specialist nurses do and the important role they undertake in helping guide us through our journey with prostate cancer. By undertaking the following survey you can help inform our government of the important role they play for the thousands of men diagnosed with prostate cancer in Australia each year.

We need your help to ensure the PCFA Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Program will continue in future. Please complete this survey as soon as possible.



The Australian Government has invested in new and enhanced cancer navigation, information and support programs for people impacted by cancer, including people with a current or previous diagnosis, carers and family.

This survey is designed for consumers who have been impacted by cancer who work with specialist cancer nurses such as PCFA Prostate Cancer Specialist nurses (PCSN).

You are invited to complete this 10-minute survey. The evaluation team would love to hear from you!

All feedback provided through the survey will be anonymous and be submitted directly to an independent evaluator. **The survey will close on 13 March 2026.**

Please complete the survey by clicking this link or scan the QR code below:

Survey link: Survey for people impacted by cancer

https://nousgroupau.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cOTlucBcEjD4oOq?Q_CHL=qr

QR code:



It is really important that anyone completing it selects 'Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses (in-person nurses) – Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia when they answer question 4 (see example below)

Q4. Which of the following services or resources funded under the Programs are you aware of?

Select all that apply

Note: some of these are currently available, others are still under development

- 13 11 20 information and support line (expansion), Cancer Council Australia
- National Cancer Nursing Education Portal, Cancer Nurses Society of Australia (CNSA)
- Awareness and education resources (incl. tailored resources for rural and CALD communities), BEAT Bladder Cancer
- Cancer Hub, Canteen, Redkite and Camp Quality
- Digital navigation hub, Cancer Council Australia
- Helpline, Head and Neck Cancer Australia
- SexFICC educational modules and resources for the cancer workforce, University of Sydney
- Multilingual cancer awareness resources, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA)
- Training modules, mental health resources and navigation tool for women with pregnancy and postpartum-associated cancers, So Brave
- Optimal Care Pathway for LGBTIQ+ people, ASHM Health
- Support guides and educational resources for Mandarin, Cantonese and Greek-speaking communities, Rare Cancers Australia
- Teal Support Program, Ovarian Cancer Australia
- Education hub for families and health professionals, ANZCHOG
- Helpline, Breast Cancer Network Australia
- Prostate cancer specialist nurses (in-person nurses), Prostate Cancer Foundation Australia
- PanSupport Helpline, Pancare Foundation
- Survivorship care resources for GPs, Lift Cancer Care
- Cancer Care Nurses (all cancer types), McGrath Foundation

LET'S JOIN WISE FRIENDS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Wise Friends is a social networking platform designed specifically for seniors, offering a safe and welcoming environment for connection and conversation.

- It provides a space where seniors can connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and engage in meaningful discussions.
- The platform includes features like a chatbot for health and lifestyle advice, curated articles, and exclusive discounts from various brands.
- Wise Friends aims to bridge the gap between seniors and technology, helping them stay informed and connected.
- Members can enjoy social gatherings, participate in interest groups, and build supportive communities.

For more information, you can visit the official website at Wise Friends

<https://www.wisefriends.co/>

Joining is free, just quote PCaHELP as your referral.



Wise Friends

RANDOMISED TRIAL FINDS DRUG THERAPY REDUCES HOT FLASHES DURING PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT



A national clinical trial led by the Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology has found that oxybutynin, a drug often used to treat overactive bladder symptoms, reduces hot flashes compared to the placebo in men receiving hormone therapy for prostate cancer.

This primary analysis of Alliance A222001 is published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

“Oxybutynin demonstrated clear and clinically meaningful improvements in both hot flash frequency and quality of life for men undergoing hormone therapy for prostate cancer,” said Bradley J. Stish, MD, the study’s lead investigator and a radiation oncologist at the Mayo Clinic.

“These results provide strong support for its use as an effective management option for this challenging and often overlooked side effect of prostate cancer treatment.”

Androgen-deprivation therapy (ADT) is an effective treatment against prostate cancer as it lowers male hormones like testosterone needed to fuel cancer cells.

However, ADT causes hot flashes in up to 80 percent of the men who take it, leading to fatigue, sleep disturbances, and reduced quality of life, often leading patients to discontinue ADT due to the side effects.

The Phase II randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial evaluated whether two doses of oxybutynin (2.5 mg twice daily and 5 mg twice daily) could improve hot flash symptoms compared with placebo over six weeks.

The study enrolled 88 men from 15 academic and community cancer centres; 81 participants were eligible for final analysis. The average age of the participants was 68.5.

In this trial, both doses of oxybutynin substantially improved hot flash symptoms compared to the placebo over the six-week treatment period.

Men receiving placebo experienced an average reduction of 2.15 hot flashes per day and a 4.85-point drop in daily hot flash severity scores, whereas those taking 2.5 mg of oxybutynin twice daily reported reductions of 4.77 hot flashes per day and a 9.94-point decrease in severity, and those receiving 5 mg twice daily experienced the largest improvements, with 6.89 fewer hot flashes per day and a 13.95-point reduction in severity.

Improvements occurred quickly, often during the first week of treatment, and were sustained throughout the study.

The proportion of patients achieving at least a 50 percent reduction in hot flash scores was also markedly higher with oxybutynin: 57 percent in the 2.5 mg group and 79 percent in the 5 mg group, compared with 32 percent in the placebo group. Treatment was well-tolerated overall. Dry mouth was the most common side effect reported.

“These results are incredibly encouraging,” added Dr. Stish. “Men with hot flashes from hormone therapy now have another therapeutic option available to help reduce their symptom burden. Future research will look to further our understanding of hot flash therapy options in this patient population.”

Source: <https://oncologynews.com.au/latest-news/randomised-trial-finds-drug-therapy-reduces-hot-flashes-during-prostate-cancer-treatment/#prettyPhoto>

ANZUP CLINICAL TRIALS

The Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group was formed in 2008, bringing together a world-leading multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, allied health care professionals, scientists, researchers, and community representatives, all working in areas related to urogenital cancer.



ANZUP has members in every state and territory in Australia and New Zealand, with an increasing international membership.

ANZUP receives infrastructure funding from the Australian Government through [Cancer Australia](#). Fundraising also remains an important part of ANZUP's activities allowing us to support each and every new clinical trial.

Urogenital cancers, also called Below the Belt cancers, are those coming from the testicles, prostate, kidney, penis or bladder. ANZUP aims to improve outcomes for people affected by these cancers by exploring and defining priority areas in Below the Belt cancer research. We investigate which data deserves attention, which treatments hold promise for the future, which drugs should be tested in clinical trials and most importantly, we need to understand the main areas of concern of our patients.

By performing clinical trials we are able to generate new evidence for better treatments, or ways of providing other support.

Clinical trials are essential for discovering new treatments for diseases, as well as new ways to detect, diagnose, and reduce the chance of developing the disease. Clinical trials can show researchers what does and doesn't work in humans that cannot be learned in animals or in the laboratory, and at the same time test for any potential side effects.

Every day hundreds of people are invited to participate in clinical trials to test new treatments and devices. Clinical trials are conducted across four phases and people can be invited to participate in any of these phases. The trial process, across all the phases, can take 5-10 years or more.

For some health conditions, participating in a clinical trial provides the only chance to receive a potentially beneficial treatment that may take many years to become commercially available. Also, results of a trial will be used to guide clinical practice and will benefit future patients.

To find out more about current ANZUP trails for prostate cancer, follow this link:

https://anzup.org.au/clinical-trials/prostate-cancer-trials/? gl=1*6aoox4* up*MQ..* ga*MTA3NDY0NTk1NS4xNzcyMTgxODA0* ga D7Y7XTDH3K*czE3 NzlxODE4MDMkbzEkZzEkdDE3NzlxODE5NzAkajYwJGwwJGgw

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

One of the most significant impacts of a prostate cancer diagnosis is managing your mental health as well as your physical health. Worrying about making the right treatment choice, worrying if the treatment has worked, worrying if the cancer may return, and worrying about side effects, relationships, work and finances are just some of the impacts that can lead to depression and anxiety. We know men suffering from prostate cancer also experience a higher rate of suicide than their cohort.

Our oncologists treat the disease, but not necessarily the side effects. Talking about our mental health is often difficult, and the one place many men feel comfortable sharing their concerns is at our support group meetings as they offer a non-judgemental and supportive environment to talk about our feelings. Managing these discussions often requires specialised skills that go beyond simply being empathetic and understanding.

To help our support group leaders, co-leaders and support group management team members best assist in these discussions PCaHELP have arranged a two-day training session to be held on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th March 2026. We will see 16 amazing leaders undertake a formal Mental Health First Aid training course in Perth led by Darren Peterson. Darren is an accredited mental health first aid instructor and founder of Take Charge Wellbeing in Perth.

The 16 leaders undertaking this training comprise both men and women representing 9 of our wonderful prostate cancer support groups in WA and include people from Albany, Denmark and Busselton. All of these people are giving their time freely to undertake this course, while PCaHELP will fund the training with funds raised from our incredibly supportive community and sponsors.

At the completion of this course we hope our leaders will be better equipped to understand the problems many of us face, and lead discussions both at our support group meetings as well as one on one talks whenever necessary. We look forward to hearing feedback from support group members on completion of this course.



THE CANCER TREATMENT THAT HAS BEEN HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT



By Tim Baker 26 February 2026

If you take even a passing interest in the world of cancer research, you could've hardly missed the recent deluge of research papers and enthusiastic proclamations around the wonders of exercise oncology.

Exercise, we can now confidently say, isn't just about quality of life or managing side effects of treatment, but holds the potential to improve your prognosis. The Challenge Phase III Trial provides the most robust evidence to date for the promise of exercise to extend survival and prevent recurrence, with huge implications for cancer care.

Does this mean that gyms full of stationary bikes and weight machines could soon replace chemo wards? In a word, no. This study was for colon cancer and can't just be extrapolated across cancer streams. And there will always be cancers that require aggressive treatment to save or extend life. But it does mean any cancer physician who claims to be practising evidence-based medicine should be prescribing supervised exercise with a suitably qualified exercise physiologist as part of standard care.

Cancer patients were once considered too frail to exercise and were instead urged to rest. This outdated advice has been thoroughly refuted by one of the pioneers of exercise oncology, Dr Robert Newton, in his new book *My Exercise Medicine For Cancer*. Subtitled *How exercise awakens the body's own medicine to treat cancer*, Dr Newton lays out the case for exercise in the most emphatic fashion, drawing on his 20 years of research as one of the world's leading researchers on the topic.

He writes: "For years, observational studies have shown that patients who exercise live longer than those who remain inactive. But observational studies can only show association; they cannot prove causation. Critics argued that perhaps healthier patients were simply more active and that exercise itself might not be the driver. **That debate is now over.**"

Dr Newton goes on to cite the Challenge Trial, that showed exercise out-performed chemotherapy in extending survival for patients with colon cancer. He goes on to say, "This finding redefines what patients should expect from supportive care ... When a medication demonstrates a survival benefit of this magnitude, it becomes standard care worldwide. It is added to guidelines, taught in medical schools, funded by healthcare systems, and integrated into every treatment plan."

Exercise doesn't have to mean running a marathon or bench pressing your own body weight. Everyone can do more than they are currently doing, when safely supervised.

As Dr Newton writes: “The evidence is overwhelming. Exercise is not only safe for people with cancer; it is one of the most powerful treatments available.”

Disclaimer: This article is not intended as medical advice and any decisions around treatments should be made in consultation with your primary cancer physician.

References:

Kerry S. et al, June 2025. Structured Exercise after Adjuvant Chemotherapy for Colon Cancer. N Engl J Med 2025 ;393:13-25, DOI: 10.10456/NEJMoa2502760

Newton, R. U. 2025. My Exercise Medicine For Cancer, Optimal Kinetics, Brisbane.

About the author

Tim Baker is an award-winning author, journalist and storyteller specialising in surfing history and culture, working across a wide variety of media from books and magazines to film, video, and theatre.

Tim was diagnosed with stage 4, metastatic prostate cancer in 2015 with a Gleason score 9. He was told he had just five years of reasonable health left, but eight years on, at 58, he’s still surfing, writing, and enjoying being a dad.

For more information and support, email telenurse@pcfa.org.au or call 1800 22 00 99.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

Our calendar of events this year has been prepared and we hope you will put these dates in your diary as we would love to see you there.

More information about each event will become available progressively on our website at: <https://www.pcahelp.org/events>

Thursday & Friday	19 th & 20 th	March	2026	Mental Health First Aid Training for Support Group Leaders
Saturday	9 th	May	2026	PCaHELP Symposium
		July	2026	Christmas in July – Gala Dinner (date TBC)
Saturday	5 th	September	2026	PCaHELP Annual Conference
Sunday	18 th	October	2026	Tour of Cowaramup
Wednesday	11 th	November	2026	Have a Go Day
Saturday	14 th	November	2026	PCaHELP Seminar
Saturday	14 th	November	2026	PCaHELP Christmas Dinner
Saturday	5 th	December	2026	PCaHELP Annual General Meeting

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT

Our next public forum will be held on Saturday 9th May 2026 and we invite you to let us know what you would like to be included.

Let us know what topic/s are of interest to you and the names of any speakers you would like to hear from. Based on your feedback we will prepare another informative and supportive Symposium.

HAVE YOUR SAY by emailing admin@pcahelp.org



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



If you use Facebook please keep an eye on our Facebook page and like our posts. The more likes we get, the more people will know about us and what we do. We will always try and keep you up to date <https://www.facebook.com/pcahelp.org/>

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. Spread the word – share this newsletter and tell people about PCaHELP and the events they host
2. Make a donation to PCaHELP at <https://donate4pcahelp.raiselysite.com/> – a few dollars makes a huge difference, especially if everyone gives
3. Volunteer to help at our events throughout the year, or even consider registering as a team member to assist our committee with special projects in 2026, and don't forget to support your local prostate cancer support group

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS WHO MAKE ALL OUR WORK POSSIBLE

