



# Find Support for Exercise and Diet

**UCSF** Helen Diller Family  
Comprehensive  
Cancer Center  
*Urologic Oncology*



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# PATIENT PROFILES

## CHRIS M.

In 2008, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 55 — as was my father at the same age, and my three uncles. I had dealt with cancer for many years within the family, but was totally unprepared when it was about ME!

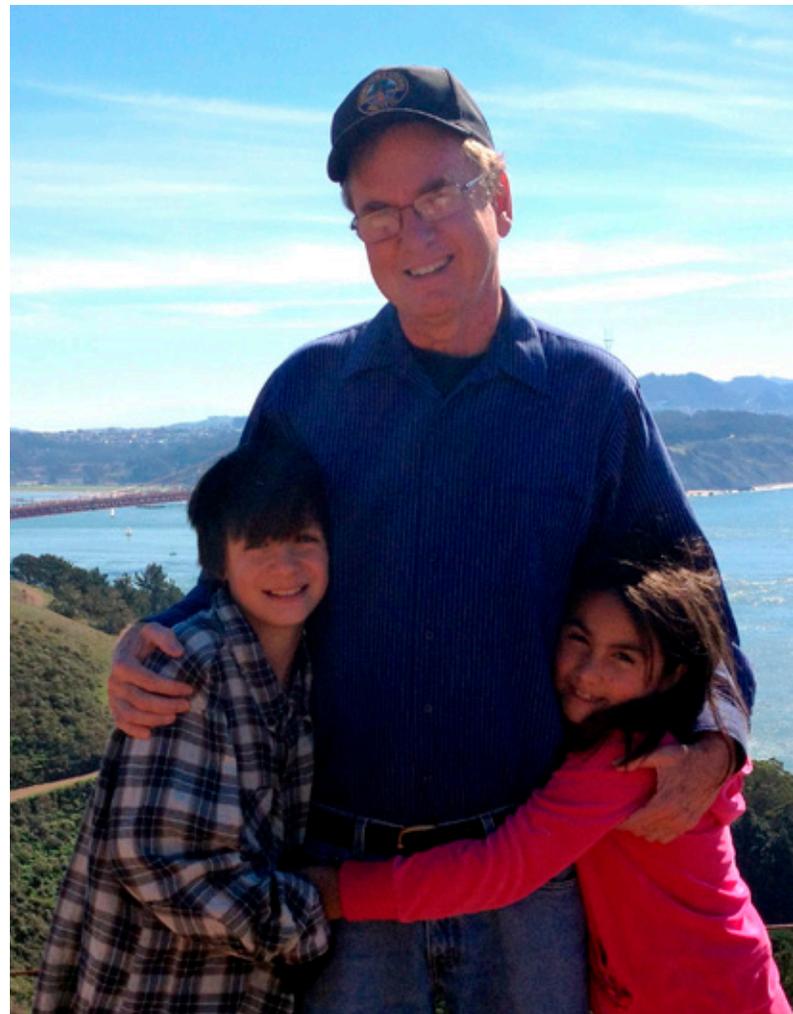
I had known the risks of that number — “55” — but like many had brainwashed my mind into thinking that only happens to others. I had big decisions to make and so little time. The doctors were wonderful but they had no time to deal with the emotional and other related health and diet issues that needed to be addressed along with the disease. My knowledge was outdated and I just wasn’t coping with the books and handouts given to me. Overwhelming was a word I used often.

A friend who knew this called me one day and asked if I would go to a support group here in Marin County.... “NO, NO, NO!” was the reply. Groups are for other people... same mindset as with the cancer. Well, after three weeks of asking, he showed up at my house and said let’s go, so I did, just to get him off my back. That night changed my life. Twenty men with varied stages of prostate cancer and years of knowledge shared their experiences with me. They discussed all my questions and shared with me their fears and frustrations with this very complex disease. For three months I went every week, each time picking up more knowledge and confidence.

When I finally scheduled the surgery and had the pre-op meetings with the UCSF staff, every one of them remarked how

well-informed and organized I was, along with a good attitude. I owe it to Stan Rosenfeld and his Marin Support Group. These groups are located all over the Bay Area and can be a major influence in your health recovery. Reading books about diet and well-being will be good for you, but nothing beats that human connection. Nothing!

Reading books about diet and well-being will be good for you, but nothing beats that human connection. Nothing!



# PATIENT PROFILES

## JIM H.

There'd be a certain amount of irony to the story were it not for the prostate cancer.

I was 44. And in the best shape of my life. I was never a very athletic — or active — guy. But when I turned 44, something changed.

Maybe it was the realization of how fast time was moving. Maybe I was just old enough to get over some of the life fears I still had from childhood. Whatever the cause, I was in the middle of training for a triathlon. Swimming, biking and running... a feat that I would have never considered for myself even one year earlier. But commitment — and goals — are a good thing. And suddenly I was in month four of a six-month training program. And yes, I was in very good shape.

But my prostate cancer didn't care about the weight I had dropped. Or my improved endurance. Or my obsession with my training schedule. The diagnosis came out of the blue. A result of a simple PSA blood test. And exactly one month before the date I was to compete in my first

ever triathlon, I went under the knife for a radical prostatectomy. Overnight, I went from being in tip-top shape to not being able to walk to the end of the driveway.

My emotions were shot. Thank goodness for my buddy, Jack. He called me a week into recovery and asked me if I liked to walk. "Do I like it or can I walk?" I replied to him. Jack laughed. But he told me he was going to take me for a walk in a local forest preserve every Wednesday for as many weeks or months as I wanted him to. It's a wonder I didn't quit after the first week — I could hardly make it 15 minutes. But Jack kept me motivated. He kept my spirits up. And week by week, my body got stronger. As did my emotions. It was one of the most important and valuable parts of my recovery.

My oncologist has always believed that I still have dormant cancer cells hanging out in my body. But he also told me he was going to put in place a plan of attack to "stack the deck in my favor." That plan included a number of things including medication, hormone therapy, diet and — you got it — exercise. I've embraced everything he has told me to do. Why? Because it feels good to be in control of as much of my destiny as possible.

I eat a smart diet. And I've never stopped exercising since good old Jack started me on that journey with some simple walks. I actually competed in a 5K to benefit prostate cancer research three months after my surgery. It was ugly. But I finished. And I've managed to get a couple triathlons, half marathons, and marathons off my bucket list.

Moving is good therapy for us guys. And trust me, all you have to do is put one foot in front of the other.



## PATIENT PROFILES

### ARNOLD P.

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006 and had 42 radiation treatments. I have always eaten well, but when you are lying on that treatment table, a lot goes through your mind. It makes you want to do what you can to stay healthy.

I was 64 at the time, and I'm an African American male, a group that has the highest mortality from prostate cancer. I knew I had to do what I could to help keep my cancer from coming back.

Radiation treatment can irritate your bowels, so I met with a nutritionist right afterwards. I just couldn't eat certain things like lettuce and other "roughage" for a while. Now I try to steer clear of red meat and white foods, like refined breads, pasta, and white rice. I get up every day and make a fresh fruit smoothie. I almost always use blueberries and bananas in coconut water, and then I add whatever is in season. I have a salad almost every night, and I eat a lot of fresh veggies, including green ones like broccoli, kale, and collard greens. I also exercise 4 to 5 days a week. That helps you sleep better, digest your food and keeps all those body functions moving. I never really had a weight problem, but I keep my weight steady now at around 205 pounds, and I feel great. I really do see my body as my temple — who is going to take care of it if I don't?

Before I retired, I worked in public health, and I still often speak with civic and church groups. I'll take a can of motor oil and will go into the audience and act like I'm pouring oil on someone. I'll ask them

what they think, and they'll say, "I think you have lost your mind." But that's what we do to our bodies when we fill them with hamburgers and fried foods.

I tell people they can change their diet, but they need to cut back, not stop cold turkey. If you eat fried food every day, cut back to a couple of times a week, and then once a month, and then only occasionally. I did that with sugar — that's my weakness, and I really have to manage myself around sweets. But I'm doing it, and I encourage people to believe that they can, too.

I really do see my body as my temple  
— who is going to take care of it  
if I don't?



# PATIENT PROFILES

## GARY K.

I was diagnosed a little more than 3 years ago with high-grade T1 non-muscle invasive bladder cancer and had initial and follow-up resection and BCG.

I found a lot of information on the web, but the quality of it varied greatly. I found an online forum\* – part of the **Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN)** – and participating was helpful to me in my quest for information and support.

My urologist recommended a turmeric supplement, so I tried that. I have also tried a cranberry supplement to help with urgency and the effects of BCG. I try to do

A cancer diagnosis is traumatic, and everyone finds a way to deal with that differently.

other things recommended by my doctor, like getting my vitamin D tested. Finding that it was low, I also started a vitamin D supplement. I also take a baby aspirin for cardiovascular health and because of my family history.

On the scale of American diets, my diet was not on the unhealthy side, but it could have been more optimal. I pursued seeing a nutritionist at the medical center, and she was very helpful.

Eating healthy is something that does not come easily to me. The things that I enjoy are not the most healthful. When I manage to eat well, sometimes I get food cravings and I find that eating more substantial,

fattier foods makes the cravings go away and my GI track happier.

Eating healthier is still a work in progress but the longer I keep trying, the more it is becoming natural, and my body is getting more used to it. If I look at my diet now compared to three years ago it has gotten better even if it isn't where I'd like it to be. I try to eat less meat – a more vegetable-centric diet. I've added legumes and lentils, and I try to eat less cheese, fewer eggs, and more yogurt. I still eat a little of the foods I always have, but much less now.

I exercised before my diagnosis, but when busy, that is something that was sacrificed. My priorities have changed, and I try harder to make sure that no matter what else is going on, I don't let myself skip exercising.

A cancer diagnosis is traumatic, and everyone finds a way to deal with that differently. For people going through it, I tell them to do what works best for you to find what's going to help them cope. The stress is real and needs to be taken as seriously as the physical problems.

To manage my stress, I started doing a lot of meditation – at least twice a day early on. That helped tremendously, especially in the beginning when I didn't know at all what the outcome would be. When the diagnosis was made but the staging wasn't known, the stress was overwhelming. I believe this to be common. There are oncologist therapists and seeing one helped me – I would highly recommend this resource to others.

It is also very important to find a doctor that you trust completely. And even with that doctor, don't be afraid to get a second or third opinion. I loved my doctor but also

## PATIENT PROFILES

got second opinions and considered all the information I was given. My background is in scientific research and the more detailed the information I knew, the more comfortable I was. I read many papers and came to appreciate how quickly the field is progressing and how there are many different opinions on what is best practice. For other people, finding a doctor they trust and listening to that doctor without going into the details themselves is what makes them most comfortable, and I think that is equally valid.

Today I am doing well and continuing with many of the things that have helped me from the beginning. I encourage you to find the support that you need and the habits that help you deal with everything that is going to happen. I've found that from the initial diagnosis, through active treatment and now long term surveillance that I've required somewhat different kinds of support to help me through it all.

I suggest finding a group of people, either online or in person, who are going through the same thing. Some people just listen, and others participate more – either is fine. Also, find what makes it easier for you to deal with the stress. Everyone is different, but trust that what works for you is the right thing even if it is different than what other people are doing.

\*BCAN forum <https://www.inspire.com/groups/bladder-cancer-advocacy-network/topic/living-with-invasive-bladder-cancer/>

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I try to eat less meat – a more vegetable-centric diet.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

## VIEWPOINTS FROM UCSF DOCTORS

Professor and Chair of Urology, Urologist, UCSF

### RAJ S. PRUTHI, MD, MHA, FACS



There is good-quality evidence that maintaining a healthy weight and smoking avoidance/cessation is important to lower risk of recurrence and progression

for non-muscle invasive bladder cancer. A Western diet high in fried foods and red meat has also been associated with greater risk of recurrent bladder cancer, while certain fruits and vegetables, and probiotics containing *Lactobacillus casei* may have benefit. The evidence linking lifestyle factors and bladder cancer is growing. A diagnosis can motivate changes in health behaviors. We are committed to supporting our patients in making these changes to improve their outcomes. Adopting these practices may also improve one's quality of life and overall health and well-being.

Associate Professor of Urology, Urologist, UCSF

### SIMA P. PORTEN, MD, MPH



Approximately 20-30% of cancer deaths may be prevented through following healthy routines: not smoking, maintaining a healthy body weight, and

obtaining better quality nutrition and regular exercise. Bladder cancer is no exception. In particular, quitting smoking is critical, as is eating a healthy diet, getting exercise, and reducing stress. Some good strategies for

a healthy diet are to make the majority of your meals and snacks full of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, fish, and lean poultry. Food to limit to special occasions are processed and barbecued red meats, refined starchy foods, and sugars.

Assistant Professor of Urology and Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Urologist, UCSF

### SAMUEL L. WASHINGTON III, MD, MAS



Incremental changes towards a healthier lifestyle, including dietary changes and exercise (cardiovascular and strength), have been shown to impact cancer progression, mitigate

potential side effects of treatment, and improve one's overall and mental health. Focusing on the individual as a whole, rather than just the disease, should be our focus for men with prostate cancer.

Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Genitourinary Medical Oncologist, UCSF

### RAHUL AGGARWAL, MD



There is a growing body of evidence that regular physical activity, including both aerobic exercise and resistance training, improves quality of life,

lessens fatigue, and, in fact, improves clinical outcomes in men with prostate cancer. It is a central component of what I discuss with patients who are starting hormone therapy.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine,  
Genitourinary Medical Oncologist, UCSF

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## HALA BORNO, MD



Prostate cancer-directed treatment, such as testosterone lowering therapy, impact the entire system and may lead to a variety of side effects

including reduced metabolism, loss of bone density, and weight gain. As a result of these changes, I think it is essential to talk with patients about how to take a holistic approach to their wellbeing using evidence-based guidance on diet and lifestyle changes. Research to date has revealed a clear benefit to vigorous exercise and certain dietary changes and our patients deserve to be equipped with the knowledge on how to best mitigate the side effects of cancer treatment.

Professor of Urology and Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Urologist, and Helen Diller Family Chair in Urology, UCSF

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## MATTHEW R. COOPERBERG, MD, MPH



Positive lifestyle changes like exercise and a healthy diet are likely to reduce cancer progression. Moreover, such changes can help men recover after

treatment – and enjoy a better quality of life. In addition, the cardiovascular benefits

of a healthy lifestyle are clear, and most Americans with prostate cancer actually die of cardiovascular disease – just like men without prostate cancer. Hence, we need to focus management not only on the tumor, but rather the whole patient.

Professor of Urology, Urologist, Ken and Donna Derr-Chevron Distinguished Professorship in Urology, and Taube Family Distinguished Professor in Urology, UCSF

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## PETER R. CARROLL, MD, MPH



There is increasing evidence that a healthy lifestyle (diet and exercise) slows the progression of prostate cancer, reduces the risks of other diseases, including

cardiac disease, and has substantial positive effects on personal well-being and the quality of one's life. It should be considered an important element of the treatment plan for every man with prostate cancer.

Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology,  
Radiation Oncologist, UCSF

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## OSAMA MOHAMAD, MD, PHD



My patients always ask me what a healthy diet consists of. I always say that the best practice for a healthy diet starts during grocery shopping. The golden rule

is that what does not grow on a tree should not go into the shopping cart.

## JOIN A RESEARCH STUDY

We lead studies investigating diet, exercise, and other modifiable factors, and the biologic mechanisms through which they act. We also conduct interventional trials that evaluate how best to help cancer survivors adopt healthy behaviors to improve disease outcomes. Contribute to science to make a difference in the lives of other patients. Find out about our current studies open for enrollment at <https://urology.ucsf.edu/lifestyle>



### PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

I appreciate all the time, effort, and expertise that you and your colleagues have put into making this study scientifically rigorous, comprehensive in approach (diet and exercise), relevant to large numbers of prostate cancer patients, and easy to access/understand and implement if the patient is motivated to do so. I know that the information you and your group has provided to me has been of great value to my understanding of the impacts dietary choices and exercise can have on my overall wellbeing; and equally important, the impacts such choices can have in improving the odds that my cancer will not reemerge and become metastatic. While there are no guarantees in life, anything that can improve one's odds of avoiding a recurrence of cancer is worth the effort!

Hopefully the data you've amassed will demonstrate that the twin tactics of dietary choices and exercise have a statistically significant and practically important impact in decreasing chances of reemergence of this cancer; or, lengthen the timeframe from the cancer diagnosis, surgery, and its reemergence. Perhaps over time it will also become apparent that these individual interventions slow the progression of metastatic cancer, should one have the misfortune of its reemergence. Buying additional quality time via implementing these lifestyle changes is more than sufficient motivation for me to embrace their inclusion into my daily life!

Again, much thanks to you and your team for your personable yet highly professional approach. I felt that I was much more than "just another case" or "study participant."

— John R. Falk, study participant

# RESOURCES TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

## JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

A support group can help men and women with cancer and their loved ones. It can be a big help before, during, and after treatment. Having support from your community can help with decision-making, enhance your quality of life, help with managing fear and anxiety, and possibly prolong life.

- **The UCSF Patient and Family Cancer Support Center** supports wellness and healing and provides information about cancer treatments, emotional support, and community resources for patients, families, caregivers, and others. This includes a library of resources, support groups, exercise classes, workshops, and retreats. ☎ (415) 885-3693

<https://www.ucsfhealth.org/services/patient-and-family-cancer-support-center>

For Cancer Support Groups:

<https://www.ucsfhealth.org/en/services/cancer-support-groups>

- **The UCSF Peer Support Program** offers cancer patients the opportunity to speak with an individual who has “been there” — a cancer survivor or someone who is farther along in their treatment. All cancer patients are welcome regardless of where they receive medical care. For Peer Support: <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/en/services/cancer-support-groups>
- **UCSF’s Prostate Cancer Support Group** meets monthly. Patients, wives, partners, family members, friends, and caregivers are all welcome: <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/DAXWQh>

- The mission of the **Prostate Health Support Group for African American Men** is to provide a safe and supportive place where men can come together for dialogue and education. Please contact Dr. Nynikka Palmer (nynikka.palmer@ucsf.edu) or Bobby Pope (☎ 415-756-3123) for additional details.
- The **Marin County Prostate Cancer Information and Support Group** is led by Stan Rosenfeld, who has been a long-time patient advocate for UCSF. To reach Stan directly, please call ☎ 415-459-4668.
- The **Bladder Cancer Education and Support Group** is available to patients with bladder cancer, caregivers, and family members to share experiences, educate one another, and support each other. Please call ☎ 415-514-1707.



# RESOURCES TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

## ACCESS OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES

- Join the American Cancer Society's online community, the **Cancer Survivors Network**, for people with cancer and their families. Find and connect with others through member search, discussion boards, chat room, and more. <http://csn.cancer.org/>

### PROSTATE CANCER

- **Us Too** is merging with **Zero** in October 2021 to provide a new comprehensive support system for prostate cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers. Access Us Too support groups at <http://www.ustoo.org> and then at <https://zerocancer.org/> after they join forces!
- The **Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF)** is committed to curing prostate cancer. It is the world's leading philanthropic organization in funding and accelerating prostate cancer research. <https://www.pcf.org/> and news blog: <https://www.pcf.org/blog/>

### BLADDER CANCER

- The **Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN)** provides patients, caregivers, and the medical community with educational resources and support services for patients' and survivors' bladder cancer journey and seeks to advance bladder cancer research. <https://bcan.org/> and nutrition guidance: <https://bcan.org/nutrition-bladder-cancer/>

### KIDNEY CANCER

- The **Kidney Cancer Association** is a global community dedicated to serving and empowering patients and caregivers, and leading change through advocacy, research, and education. <https://www.kidneycancer.org/>
- The **National Kidney Foundation** also has many resources for patients including a toll-free helpline and a patient-to-patient support program. <https://www.kidney.org/>

### TESTICULAR CANCER

- The **Testicular Cancer Society** provides education about the disease and gives support for fighters, survivors, and caregivers. <https://testicularcancersociety.org/>
- The **Testicular Cancer Resource Center** has a library of valuable resources for patients and has compiled personal stories from over 80 people who have shared their experience. <http://thetcrc.org/>
- **Testicular Cancer Awareness Foundation** is compassionately dedicated to raise awareness and educate others about the most common form of cancer in men ages 15-14 and provide lifesaving valuable support for patients, survivors, and caregivers. <https://www.testicularcancerawarenessfoundation.org/>

# RESOURCES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

Take a picture of this QR bar code using your smart phone to access the digital guide!



We'd like to know what you think! Take a brief survey to share your thoughts at <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/RYbtJu> or using the code.

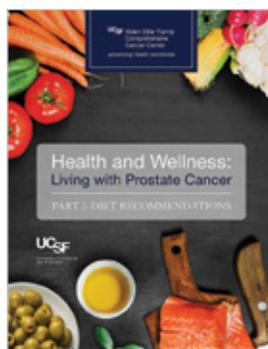


Our team aims to improve patient care through lifestyle studies and publications.

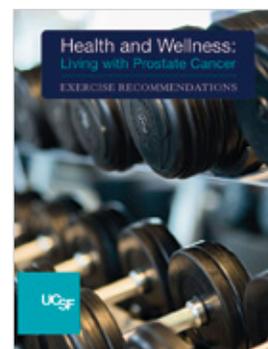
Access our freely available materials at <https://urology.ucsf.edu/lifestyle/resources>  
Some of our materials are highlighted below.



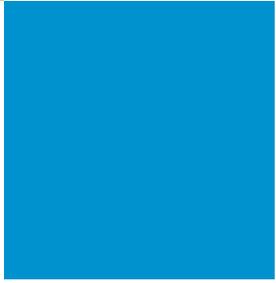
Healthy Eating Tips for All:  
See our tips for healthy items to buy next time you are at the grocery store and daily and weekly eating tips.



See our guidelines for food recommendations for a healthy prostate cancer diet.



Exercise may lower your risk of death from prostate cancer. See our recommendations and tools to stay active.



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