

# Men's cancer risk to climb to one in two as research drives up survival

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A [man's lifetime risk of developing cancer](#) is set to reach one in two by 2027 according to new Cancer Research UK figures released today (Wednesday).

This prediction means that within 15 years 50 men out of every 100 are likely to be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lifetime as opposed to 44 out of every 100 in 2010.

Women's lifetime [cancer risk](#) is also increasing and is predicted to rise from 40 to 44 out of every 100 women by 2027.

Set against this is the fact that [cancer survival](#) has doubled in the last 40 years thanks to research developing better techniques to detect the disease and improved treatments to increase survival. So while the risk

of being diagnosed with cancer is rising, the overall chance of surviving it is improving.

Age is the biggest risk factor for cancer and the increase in risk is largely due to more people living longer. As our lifespan increases more people will reach an age when they are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer.

These projections are released ahead of a new Cancer Research UK TV advertising campaign launching on Boxing Day that is designed to highlight that it is only through research that cancer will be beaten.

The cancers set to increase most in the next 15 years include prostate, bowel and melanoma.

[Prostate cancer](#) remains a continuing challenge. Cases of the disease are rising but it is not yet possible to distinguish which prostate cancers will be life-threatening and which won't.

Professor Malcolm Mason, Cancer Research UK's prostate cancer expert, said: "Prostate cancer needs research. We have many questions and research is key to providing answers about the disease. As our population ages, growing numbers of men will be diagnosed with the disease. Over the last 40 years prostate cancer incidence rates in Great Britain have tripled, and three-quarters of cases are diagnosed in men aged over 65 years."

One example of where research may lead us is the earlier work from Cancer Research UK scientists that indicates a protein called MSMB may help identify men at greater risk of prostate cancer. The researchers showed that this protein seems more accurately linked to prostate cancer than the marker currently tested for – the prostate specific antigen (PSA).

Professor Mason added: "It's men at higher risk of the disease who might benefit most from screening, and targeting screening to these men could be a better approach than screening all men. Further work is needed to prove if this test could be useful but it's only through continued research that we'll be able to offer improved tests to reduce the number of men who die from the disease."

Research has also already led to an improvement in the way bowel cancer is diagnosed and prevented. A 16-year Cancer Research UK trial which showed how a one-off flexi-scope test\* could reduce the number of deaths from bowel cancer by almost half (43 per cent), and the number of new cases by a third, in those who take up the screening test.

Professor Wendy Atkin, Cancer Research UK's bowel cancer screening expert who led the research on flexi-scope screening, said: "Our research showed for the first time that we could dramatically reduce the incidence of [bowel cancer](#), and the number of people dying from the disease, by using this one-off test.

"Our work is a fantastic example of the benefits that research can bring. There is no other way we would be able to develop new treatments, know whether a new treatment is better or worse and know who should receive it."

Work by Cancer Research UK and others around the world has led to a number of promising new treatments for advanced melanoma that are bringing hope to patients. It is also critical to continue efforts to prevent the disease, as most cases are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and sunbeds.

Dr Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, said: "These figures provide a glimpse into the future. On the plus side our life expectancy is increasing but this also means more of us are likely to be

diagnosed with cancer.

"It's only through research that we will be able to beat cancer. We need to do more work to understand what drives cancer and how we can prevent it, as well as developing new treatments to reduce the number of people who will die from it.

"Understanding the biology of [cancer](#) is rather like completing a complex jigsaw puzzle. Many pieces have already fallen into place but we need more research before we can complete the picture. And thanks to the generosity of the public, our world class scientists are playing a leading role in beating this devastating disease."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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