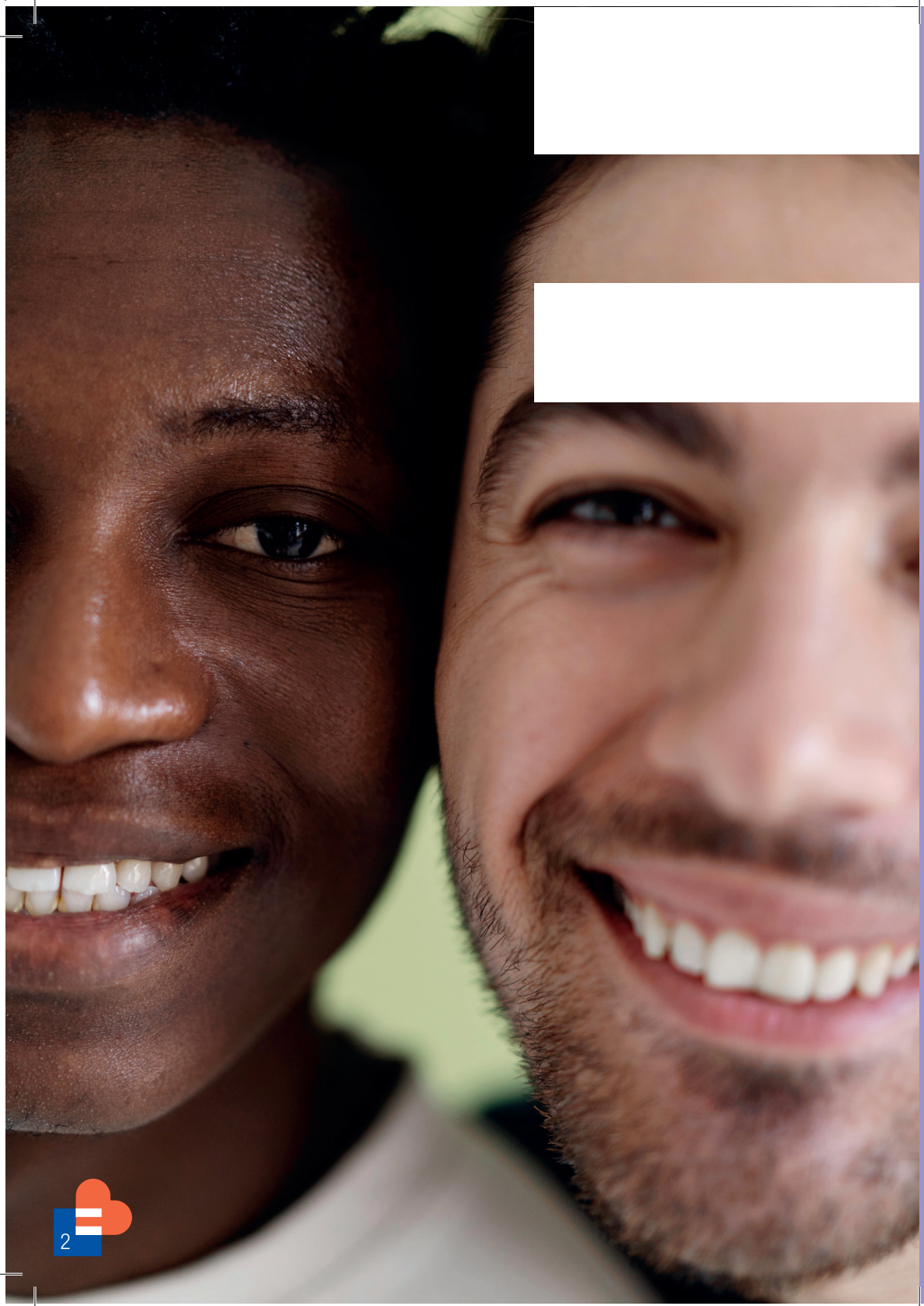


CANCERS IN MEN

BEING INFORMED IS THE FIRST STEP TO LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

OCTOBER 2025 EDITION

LA LIGUE CONTRE LE CANCER





You can take action for your health starting today:

Understanding the cancers that affect men helps you take an active role in your health.

Since 1990, the number of cancers in men has risen considerably, but the trend has stabilised or even reversed since 2012. This is encouraging: it shows that it is possible to make a difference.

Smoking, alcohol, an unbalanced diet and lack of physical activity increase the risk. But changing your habits can reduce it: stop smoking, eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly and limit alcohol. These simple steps have a real impact.

Every action counts when it comes to protecting your health.



Preventing cancer in men: what does it mean?

245,000

Every year in France, more than 245,000 men learn that they have cancer.

(out of an estimated total of 433,136 new cases in 2023)

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men.

Others, such as testicular cancer (in younger men) and penile cancer, are rarer but do occur.

Men are also more affected by common cancers such as lung and colon cancer.

The good news: for many of these cancers, you can reduce the risk through everyday habits (stopping smoking, limiting alcohol, a healthy diet, physical activity, etc.) and by knowing your body so you can spot signs that need medical attention.

For colorectal cancer, a high-quality organised screening programme can detect the disease early and allow successful treatment in most cases, while limiting harm.

Knowing more about these cancers - their risk factors, frequency, symptoms and screening options - helps you protect yourself.





PROSTATE CANCER

The most common cancer in men

60,000
new cases per year

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men.

It accounts for almost one cancer in four and remains a major cause of death in men, especially those aged over 65.

RISK FACTORS

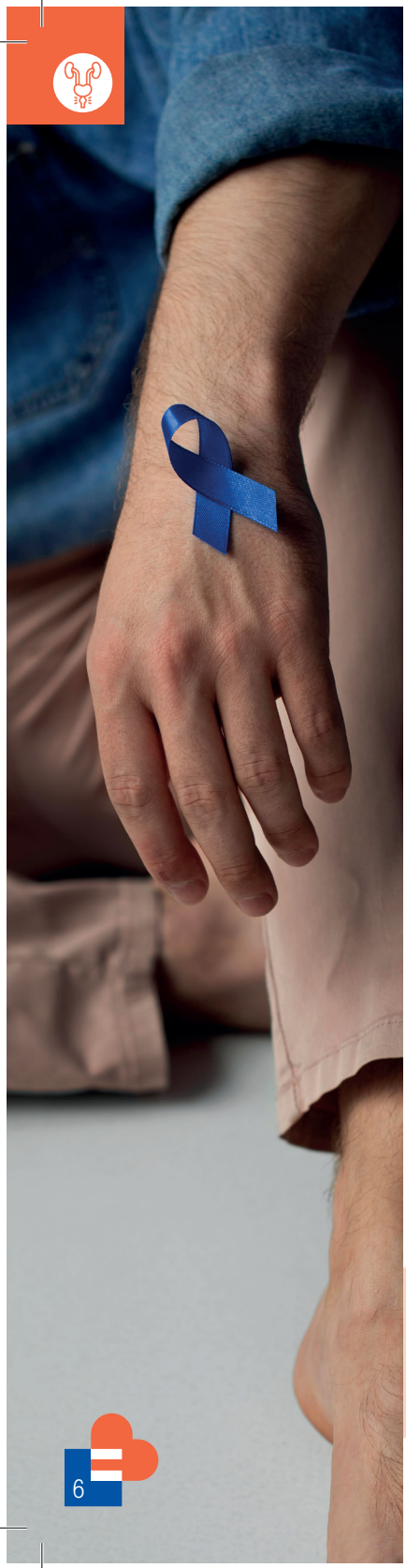
The main risk factor for prostate cancer is age: the older you get, the greater the risk.

Since 2021, exposure to pesticides has been recognised as an occupational risk factor.

Some men are also at higher risk, especially those with a family history or those of West African or Caribbean origin.

Other suspected factors include excess weight and a diet too high in dairy products or simple sugars.





WHY IS EARLY DETECTION OF PROSTATE CANCER NOT ROUTINE?

Early detection currently relies mainly on two examinations:

DIGITAL RECTAL EXAMINATION

A BLOOD TEST TO MEASURE PSA (a protein produced by the prostate)

But these tests are not infallible. They cannot always determine whether a cancer is aggressive or slow-growing.

Only a tissue sample (biopsy) can provide a firm diagnosis.

It is important to know that in 8 out of 10 cases, prostate cancer grows very slowly and does not require immediate treatment. Treating it too early can cause significant side effects, such as urinary or sexual problems, without any real benefit to the patient's health.

Some cancers, however, can quickly become aggressive, making careful medical follow-up essential. The real challenge is to identify which cancers need monitoring and which require prompt treatment.

The best approach is to talk to your doctor. They can assess your risk and advise on the follow-up best suited to your situation.



TESTICULAR CANCER

A rare cancer to watch for, especially in younger men

Testicular cancer is relatively rare, accounting for only 1-2% of cancers in men. However, it mainly affects young men, sometimes from age 15, with a peak between ages 30 and 34.

The good news: when detected early, this cancer responds very well to treatment. Even at an advanced stage, the chances of a cure remain high.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

The main identified risk factor is cryptorchidism (an undescended testicle at birth).

In this case, the risk of cancer is 12 to 48 times higher. Early surgery helps reduce the risk without eliminating it completely.

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

The most common symptoms are:
- An unusual lump in a testicle;
- A feeling of heaviness, discomfort or pain;
- A change in appearance (swelling, redness or inflammation).

If you notice an unusual change, it is important to see a doctor promptly.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: CHECK YOUR TESTICLES REGULARLY

Although there is no organised screening programme for testicular cancer, men are encouraged to check their testicles regularly.

This simple, accessible habit helps detect cancer early, greatly increasing the chances of a cure and reducing the burden of treatment.

Watch the video to learn how to check yourself:



CANCERS LINKED TO HPV INFECTION

ANAL CANCER: RARE, BUT INCREASING

2,011

estimated new cases in France in 2018, including 479 in men.

Anal cancer is relatively rare, but its incidence has increased in recent years.

In almost 90% of cases, it is linked to persistent HPV (human papillomavirus) infection.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

- Anal intercourse increases the risk of developing this cancer.
- People with weakened immune systems (for example, those living with HIV or who have had a transplant) are more at risk because their bodies find it harder to clear the virus.
- Smoking increases the risk.

PREVENTION: VACCINATION AND STOPPING SMOKING

HPV vaccination is now an essential preventive measure. It is recommended for boys and girls aged 11 to 14, with catch-up vaccination available up to age 26.

Stopping smoking provides effective additional protection by reducing the risk of this cancer.

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

Watch for unexplained bleeding, itching, pain, discomfort or a lump around the anus, or changes in bowel habits. These symptoms can resemble haemorrhoids, but do not hesitate to see a doctor to be sure.

If you notice any of these symptoms, it is important to see a doctor. Early diagnosis greatly improves the chances of effective treatment.



PENILE CANCER: RARE, BUT PREVENTABLE

Penile cancer is rare, accounting for less than 1% of cancers in men (around 450 cases in 2018).

Although it mainly occurs after age 60, it can develop earlier. Almost one case in three is associated with HPV infection, making this the main preventable risk factor.

RISK FACTORS:

- Age: the risk increases as you get older
- Persistent HPV infection
- A weakened immune system
- Chronic inflammation of the penis linked to phimosis (a tight foreskin) or a build-up of dead skin cells and bacteria (smegma), encouraged by inadequate hygiene

PREVENTION: GOOD HYGIENE AND HPV VACCINATION

Prevention relies mainly on HPV vaccination. Good daily intimate hygiene and, in some cases, circumcision can also reduce the risk.

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

This cancer most often appears on the glans or foreskin. Regular self-checks are important for detecting early abnormalities.

Signs to watch for include a sore that does not heal, a growing lump or wart, persistent redness or irritation, a change in colour, unusual discharge or smell under the foreskin, or a swollen lymph node in the groin.

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to see a doctor.



OTHER TYPES OF CANCER IN MEN

LUNG CANCER: STOPPING SMOKING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in men and the deadliest.

Every smoke-free day is a step towards better health.

SOME FIGURES:

33,500 / YEAR	new lung cancer cases each year
20,500 / YEAR	deaths from lung cancer each year

In 8 out of 10 cases, this cancer is caused by tobacco. Cigarettes, cannabis and passive smoking: all forms carry risks.

Other factors can also increase the risk, such as occupational exposure (asbestos, dust, etc.), pollution or a family history.

Stopping smoking remains the best prevention. It also helps after diagnosis by improving treatment effectiveness, reducing complications and improving quality of life.



COLORECTAL CANCER: SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE SCREENING

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men. Smoking, alcohol, nitrites, an unbalanced diet and inactivity increase the risk.

SOME FIGURES:

26,000 / YEAR	new colorectal cancer cases each year
9,000 / YEAR	deaths from colorectal cancer each year

ORDER YOUR SCREENING KIT:

The good news: a simple, free, painless test can detect it early, when the chances of a cure are very high.

Offered every two years to people aged 50 to 74, this test is easy to do at home using a kit received by post or available from a pharmacy or doctor. A small step to prevent a major risk.

BLADDER CANCER: MORE COMMON IN MEN

Bladder cancer mainly affects men, whose risk is 3 to 4 times higher than women's. On average, it is diagnosed around age 70.

RISK FACTORS:

The main risk factor is smoking, responsible for one case in two. Some occupational exposures (dyes, paints, rubber and hydrocarbons) also increase the risk.

WARNING SIGNS:

The main warning sign is blood in the urine, sometimes without pain. Other symptoms include burning, a frequent need to urinate, and pelvic or lower back pain.

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to see a doctor.

LIVER CANCER: HEPATOCELLULAR CARCINOMA

This is the most common form of liver cancer. In France, there were an estimated 11,658 new cases in 2023, 76% in men (8,874 men and 2,784 women).

RISK FACTORS: The main causes are liver cirrhosis, often linked to alcohol, hepatitis B or C, or fatty liver disease. Obesity, diabetes and some liver disorders can also increase the risk.

WARNING SIGNS: This cancer may remain silent for a long time. Fatigue, digestive problems, jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), dark urine or persistent itching warrant prompt medical attention.

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to see a doctor.

MELANOMA: A SKIN CANCER TO WATCH CLOSELY

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. Its incidence has risen considerably in recent decades. In men, it most often develops after age 50, often on the back or chest. Check your skin regularly!

It is essential to examine your skin every 3 months to spot new moles or any changes in existing ones.

TO KNOW WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR, REMEMBER THE ABCDE RULE:

Asymmetry: an irregular shape;
Border: irregular edges;
Colour: uneven colour;
Diameter: over 6 mm;
Evolution: any recent change (size, colour, itching or bleeding).

Early detection increases the chances of a cure.

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to see a doctor.





Test your

PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING IS AUTOMATICALLY RECOMMENDED FOR ALL MEN FROM AGE 50

Screening is not routine. It depends on age, family history, origin and an individual discussion with a doctor.



A SIMPLE BLOOD TEST CAN DETECT PROSTATE CANCER

A PSA test (a prostate-specific protein) may raise a concern, but cannot establish a diagnosis on its own. Further examinations are necessary.

COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING SHOULD BE DONE EVERY TWO YEARS FROM AGE 50

This simple, free test enables early detection, when treatment is more effective.

knowledge



HPV-RELATED CANCERS ONLY AFFECT WOMEN

Some cancers also affect men (anus, penis, throat, etc.). HPV vaccination is therefore recommended for boys too.

More information in the HPV brochure:

EATING TOO MUCH PROCESSED MEAT INCREASES THE RISK OF SOME CANCERS

Especially colorectal cancer. Limit processed meat to no more than 150 g per week and choose a balanced diet.

More information in the colorectal cancer brochure:

ONE BEER A DAY IS NOT DANGEROUS

Even small amounts of alcohol increase cancer risk. There is no risk-free level.

Useful guidelines:
- No more than 10 standard drinks per week;
- No more than 2 drinks per day;
- Have alcohol-free days each week.

More information in the brochure on the dangers of alcohol:

Contact your nearest La Ligue committee to find out about its prevention and information activities.

ligue-cancer.net

MORE INFO

LA LIGUE CONTRE LE CANCER

Cancers in men: understand more to protect yourself better

Every year in France, more than 245,000 men are affected by cancer. Some cancers, such as those of the prostate, testicles or penis, specifically affect men. Others, such as lung and colorectal cancer, also affect women but are more common in men.

The good news: in most cases, you can take action!

By adopting healthy habits, knowing the risk factors and taking part in organised screening, you can reduce your risk and improve your chances of a cure.

Healthy habits

- Do not smoke
- Avoid alcohol
- Monitor and maintain your weight
- Limit exposure to UV rays
- Get vaccinated against HPV
- Do moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day
- Limit red meat, processed meat and animal fats
- Eat more vegetables, nuts, fruit and high-fibre foods
- Take part in organised colorectal screening
- **See a doctor if you have symptoms or concerns**

La Ligue near you
0 800 940 939

(Free call in France, anonymous and confidential)

Press 1 to speak to a psychologist, 9 am to 7 pm

Press 2 for information about administrative and legal matters and your rights, 9 am to 5 pm
(permanence.sociale@ligue-cancer.net)

Press 3 for help with loan insurance and borrowing difficulties, 9 am to 5.30 pm
(AIDEA@ligue-cancer.net)

Unofficial English translation. Original statements and figures retained.

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