

## **Harvard and Australian Study on Ejaculation frequency and prostate cancer**

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Despite the importance of prostate cancer, its causes remain unknown. Scientists do know that genetics plays a strong role, and they have sound evidence that diet and other lifestyle factors are also important.

Since the prostate is a reproductive organ that produces fluid for the ejaculate, researchers have long wondered if sexual factors influence a man's risk of prostate cancer, but a Harvard study provides good news for sexually active men.

### **The Harvard ejaculation study**

The Health Professionals Follow-Up Study has been collecting information about a large group of volunteers since 1986. All the men are health care providers, including dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, optometrists, ophthalmologists, and podiatrists. Most are white. In 1992, 29,342 men between the ages of 46 and 81 provided information about their average number of ejaculations per month in young adulthood (age 20–29), middle age (40–49), and in the most recent year. Ejaculations included sexual intercourse, nocturnal emissions, and masturbation. The volunteers provided comprehensive health and lifestyle data every two years until the study concluded in 2000.

The scientists found no evidence that frequent ejaculations mark an increased risk of prostate cancer. In fact, the reverse was true: High ejaculation frequency was linked to a decreased risk. Compared to men who reported 4–7 ejaculations per month across their lifetimes, men who ejaculated 21 or more times a month enjoyed a 31% lower risk of prostate cancer. And the results held up to rigorous statistical evaluation even after other lifestyle factors and the frequency of PSA testing were taken into account.

### **Ejaculation data from Down Under**

An Australian study of 2,338 men examined the impact of sexual factors on the occurrence of prostate cancer before the age of 70. Like the Harvard research, the Australian investigation evaluated total ejaculations rather than sexual intercourse itself. Like the American men, the Australians who ejaculated most frequently enjoyed a reduced risk of prostate cancer. The effect was strongest for the frequency of ejaculations in young adulthood, even though prostate cancer was not diagnosed until many decades later. Even so, the apparent protection extended to all age groups. In all, men who averaged 4.6–7 ejaculations a week were 36% less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer before the age of 70 than men who ejaculated less than 2.3 times a week on average.

### **A piece of the puzzle**

The studies from the United States and Australia do little to answer these critical questions — but they do open a new avenue for research. Since both report that a high frequency of ejaculation early in adulthood has the greatest impact on the risk of prostate cancer decades later, they call attention to the role of events early in life, when the prostate is developing and maturing. There is certainly precedent for a long lag between cause and effect. For example, childhood sunburn is a major risk factor for malignant melanomas in adulthood, and prenatal factors that influence birth weight appear to influence the lifetime risk for hypertension and heart disease.

In 1807 William Wordsworth wrote, "The child is father of the man." With respect to prostate cancer, though, sexual activity in adolescence may be a predictor of risk in adulthood.

Here's a health tip that might sound pretty good to many guys: Have more sex, or masturbate more, and you might lower your odds of getting [prostate cancer](#). Research suggests that the more often men ejaculate, the less likely they are to have the disease.

### **What's the Link?**

Over the years, there's been growing evidence of a link between ejaculation and lower chances of prostate cancer. But the 2016 results of a major study made the strongest case yet. The researchers asked men to answer questions about how often they ejaculated. How didn't matter -- sex, [masturbation](#), or wet [dreams](#) were all included. Then they tracked almost 32,000 of these men for 18 years.

The researchers found that guys who did it the most (at least 21 times a month) had about a 20% lower chance of [prostate cancer](#), compared with those who did it less (4 to 7 times a month). That was true in several age groups.

The exact number of times didn't matter. Basically, the more men ejaculated in a month, the less likely they were to get prostate cancer.

Why might ejaculation help [prostate](#) health? Experts aren't sure. Some believe that it can flush out harmful chemicals that might build up in [semen](#).

### **What We Don't Know**

While research is promising, there's still a lot scientists need to learn. Some things to consider:

- There's no proof that ejaculating more actually causes lower chances of prostate [cancer](#). For now, doctors just know they're connected. It may be that men who do it more tend to have other [healthy habits](#) that are lowering their odds.
- Ejaculation doesn't seem to protect against the most deadly or advanced [types of prostate cancer](#). Experts don't know why.
- Scientists don't know if ejaculation during sex vs. masturbation has the same benefits. Some research has found that the makeup of semen is different for each. For example, semen during sex has higher levels of [sperm](#) and some chemicals. It's possible that these could make a difference in a man's odds of having prostate cancer.
- Not all studies have found a benefit. The 2016 study got attention because of its size (almost 32,000 men) and length (18 years). But some smaller studies have not shown the same good results. A few even found that some men, specifically younger men, who masturbated more had slightly higher chances of prostate [cancer](#). Some researchers wonder if a man's age may affect whether more ejaculation helps.

### **The Bottom Line**

Researchers are still studying the connection between ejaculation and prostate health. So doctors may not be ready to write prescriptions for "More Sex!" yet. But since masturbation and safe sex probably won't cause you any health problems, there's likely no harm in doing them more often.

For cancer experts, the research is exciting because it may offer men a chance to lower their chances for prostate cancer. Most things that raise a man's odds, like age and family history of the disease, aren't things that he can change. But ejaculating more? That's a job many men are willing to take on.

**Reference**

[https://www.health.harvard.edu/mens-health/ejaculation\\_frequency\\_and\\_prostate\\_cancer](https://www.health.harvard.edu/mens-health/ejaculation_frequency_and_prostate_cancer)