

## Bruce, 72

**Former police officer and semi-retired IT technician who endured symptoms of an enlarged prostate for more than a decade, *WHEATBELT WA***

Former police officer and semi-retired IT technician, Bruce, 72, Perth was diagnosed with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or an enlarged prostate, in 2021, after enduring symptoms for more than a decade.



An enlarged prostate is a common, urological condition affecting older men<sup>1,2</sup> that involves a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, and expansion of the surrounding tissues.<sup>3,4</sup> This enlargement leads to compression of the urethra, reducing the flow of urine from the bladder, and sometimes blocking it entirely.<sup>5</sup>

Significantly, Bruce's father, and grandfather, and all five of his Uncle's, lived with an enlarged prostate.

Despite researching his symptoms – incomplete bladder emptying, a weak urine stream, and nocturia (frequency of urination at night) – and strongly suspecting he may be living with an enlarged prostate, Bruce nonetheless, chose to dismiss his symptoms for more than 10 years before seeking medical advice.

Eventually, Bruce's enlarged prostate began to compromise his quality of life. He was forced to make frequent toilet stops when travelling, and reduce his water intake at work, and when spending time with family and friends.

In 2021, Bruce was finally diagnosed with an enlarged prostate, after which he trialled a number of treatment options, to no avail. Bruce's GP referred him to a urologist, who recommended an effective treatment option for him.

Today, Bruce has chosen to share his story, to raise community awareness, and understanding of what it is like to live with an enlarged prostate, and to urge men nation-wide to prioritise their health.

This is Bruce's story.

Bruce developed symptoms of an enlarged prostate more than 10 years ago.

"My symptoms developed gradually. My urine flow started to slow down over time, and I started to wake up two-to-three times a night to use the bathroom.

"As my symptoms progressed, my urine flow slowed down substantially, and eventually became a trickle," said Bruce.

"I couldn't get a good night's sleep. I was visiting the toilet five-to-six times a night.

"At work, and in social situations, I had to be mindful of my water consumption, to avoid having to visit the toilet too much," Bruce said.

"My family knew there was something wrong, because they had to factor in multiple toilet stops for me whenever we went on a drive.

"It was a terribly challenging time," said Bruce.

Bruce trialled multiple treatments post-diagnosis, each of which proved ineffective for him, and left him feeling very frustrated.

"I knew I would most likely, develop an enlarged prostate, given my strong family history of the disease.

"Fortunately, my IT background allowed me to readily access, and research, my symptoms, and available treatment options," Bruce said.

"After much trial and error, and speaking with different doctors, I eventually found a minimally invasive treatment option that worked for me."

Bruce's experience highlights the importance of seeking early intervention for an enlarged prostate.

"I now recognise the importance of securing an early diagnosis, and appropriate treatment.

"Men showing symptoms of an enlarged prostate should visit their GP, or urologist, without delay, for an accurate diagnosis, and to learn about treatment options available," said Bruce.

According to Bruce, stigma continues to weigh heavily on men's health-related issues.

"Men's health is an important topic. Yet I suspect most men living with an enlarged prostate, tend to suffer in silence. For years I chose not to discuss the topic with anyone.

"Increasing community awareness and understanding of this sensitive men's health topic will help to reduce the associated stigma, and allow men to talk more openly about it," Bruce said.

"I definitely would have been much less embarrassed, and found it easier to discuss, had my friends chosen to speak openly about it."

Bruce has a final, personal message for other Australian men living with symptoms of an enlarged prostate.

"If you suspect you're living with symptoms of an enlarged prostate, don't bury your head in the sand.

"Seek prompt medical advice to help improve the quality of your life," said Bruce.

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