

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

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THE OCTOBER MEETING.

The speaker for October was scheduled to be Nicky Robinson, but due to unforeseen circumstances she could not be present. Instead the speaker was Kim Wilcox who kindly offered to give the talk, that was very interesting and informative.

Kim introduced herself as Nutrition and Communication Coordinator at Penny Brohn UK that is a charity based in Bristol.

Kim's talk was on 'Eating well with prostate cancer - Exploring the role of diet and nutrition' with reference particularly to prostate cancer.

Kim specialises in the link between physical and mental health and the role that nutrition has between the two. She said that Penny Brohn is a charity that offers innovative whole-person care for people living with cancer at any stage, and looks at physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing.

She started with an overview of the general evidence of the role of diet and nutrition in prostate cancer, and what this means for a supportive diet. She said that this does not replace any advice given to you by your healthcare team, especially during treatment. There can be conflicting information concerning nutrition and Kim said that she would focus on undisputed common principles.

Kim showed a comprehensive slide based on a report by the World Cancer Research Fund. This listed top 10 recommendations for cancer prevention. That are:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans
- Limit consumption of 'fast foods' and other processed foods high in fats, starches and sugars
- Limit consumption of red and processed meat
- Limit consumption of sugar sweetened drinks
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Do not use supplements for cancer prevention
- For mothers, breast feed babies if you can
- After a cancer diagnosis follow our recommendations if you can.

Kim said that the two highest cancer risks are smoking and unhealthy weight. She also said that eating a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans is a prostate cancer specific recommendation. At least 30 grams of fibre per day is recommended, whereas the average person consumes only about 12 grams per day.

Some books are scaremongering but all have a common denominator of advising whole foods, plant foods and reducing processed foods.

Other recommendations based on Mediterranean diets are high legumes, beans, chick peas, lentils and soy.

Kim said that the 'Western' diet tends to have 'empty calories' with poor quality fats, refined carbohydrates and sugar and low in nutrients, leading to weight gain, hormone imbalance, insulin resistance, inflammation and hormone imbalance and an increased risk of diseases including cancer.

Prostate cancer cells are more fat dependent than other types of cancer hence we should avoid saturated fats and focus instead on high quality fats such as polyunsaturated fats and mono unsaturated fats that can be found in oily fish, plant foods, nuts and seeds.

Further benefits to healthy foods can be added by the use of spices such as cardamon, saffron, pine, oregano, turmeric and ginger.

The World Cancer Research Fund has made suggestive evidence that the following cause a higher risk of prostate cancer:

- Diets high in dairy products
- Diets high in calcium
- Low plasma vitamin E
- Low plasma selenium
- Adult body fatness

Kim emphasised that the dairy and calcium risks are only under quite high intakes and normal amounts are safe to consume, and that the increase in risk is quite small. Dairy products is a wide ranging term and dairy products that are low in saturated fat and lower in sugar are preferable.

Eating 50g of cheese has a 9% increase in risk overall but a moderate amount on top of a low saturated fat diet will not make a big effect.

Evidence for the effects of individual foods or nutrients is mixed but some studies suggest that the following may be beneficial for cancers including prostate cancer:

- Lycopenes – found in tomato puree, tomatoes, guava and pink grapefruit.
- Pomegranate : 250ml/day slowed PSA rate of increase.
- Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables
- Turmeric
- Green tea, 2 – 4 cups per day
- Garlic and onions
- Flaxseeds
- Soy foods
- Regular and varied intake of mushrooms
- Omega 3, found in olive oil, salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines and herring
- Foods that support the gut microbiome e.g. sauerkraut, yoghurt, prebiotic foods and polyphenols (e.g. berries, broccoli, turmeric, pomegranate and green tea).
- Good blood levels of vitamin E.

Kim finished her talk by summarising the recommendations on diet, which are to:

- Have a balanced diet with all food groups and no one item to excess.
- Everything in moderation, even treats are allowed.
- Eat fruit and vegetables that are high in fibre, and have good quality fats and varied protein with some herbs and spices.

In response to a question Kim said that high amounts of calcium may have a negative effect but calcium is essential during hormone therapy.

Kim was thanked for her very informative talk.

NEXT RPCSG MEETING – 5th November 2021 **IN PERSON AND BY ZOOM**

The next group meeting will be on Friday 5th November in St Andrews church hall. This will be the first time since the pandemic started that we have been able to have meetings in person. It will be a hybrid meeting which means that it will also be online by Zoom, for those members who would prefer to participate remotely. For such members it will be like a normal Zoom meeting in that they will be able to both see and hear the events going on in the hall and be able to ask questions to the speakers.

Specialist nurses Tessa Martin and Jo Hand will answer your questions. Tessa is very familiar to us having been present at several previous Questions & Answers sessions, and Jo Hand is the research nurse who gave a talk to the group in September 2021.

In an email that I recently sent to all members I described the Covid precautions that we will take for those people attending in person.

RPCSG WALKS

We held an enjoyable walk in October alongside the Basingstoke canal with 12 people taking part.

The next RPCSG walk will be on Tuesday 9th November starting at the Waterside Centre in Thames Valley Park Drive at 10:40 a.m. and will visit Reading via Caversham. There will be a refreshment stop along the way. Free parking is available at the roadside between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

The address of the Waterside Centre is:
Wokingham Waterside Centre
Thames Valley Park Drive
Earley, RG6 1PQ

Directions to the Waterside Centre are to travel north on the A329M/A3290 until the end of the road that finishes at a roundabout. Turn right at the roundabout onto Thames Valley Park Drive and the entrance to the car park is about 20 yards on the left. The car park will likely be closed but you can continue past the car park and park free at the roadside between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. We will return well before 4:30 p.m.

A sat nav using RG6 1PQ will take you beyond the car park so use the directions above as you approach Thames Valley Park Drive.

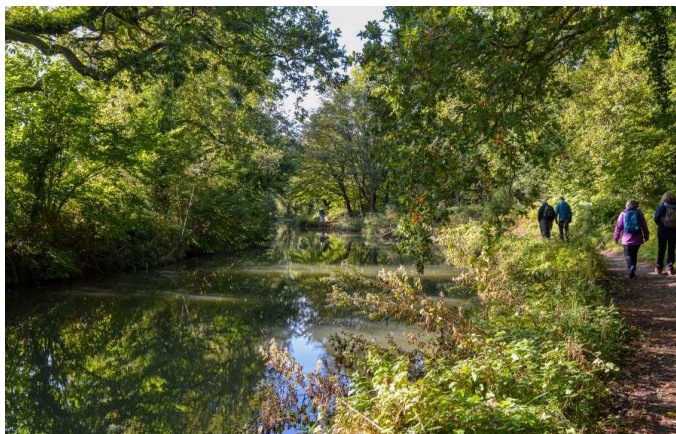
Please bring your own refreshments for this walk.

If you have any queries about the walk please contact Richard Brown on 07973 662925.

COFFEE MORNINGS

The November coffee morning will be on Tuesday 16th November and will again be at The Cunning Man near to Burghfield. We will meet in the garden of the pub at 11:30 a.m. that is the time that the pub opens for coffee. I will send details and directions nearer to the event.

Some photographs during the October walk:



Steve with medal and T-shirt for completing the Virgin Money London Marathon

Steve Parkinson
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This newsletter does not offer medical advice. Nothing contained in the newsletter is intended to constitute professional advice for medical diagnosis or treatment or to advocate or recommend the purchase of any product or use of any service or guarantee the credentials or appropriateness of any health care provider. Members are strongly advised to consult with an appropriate professional for specific advice tailored to their situation.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Friday 5th November 2021 is an RPCSG Questions & Answers session held both in person at the church hall and by Zoom.

Tuesday 9th November 2021 is a walk to Reading from the Waterside Centre.

Tuesday 16th November is a coffee morning at The Cunning Man.