

Doug, 73

Retired serviceman and mining industry worker who developed ED following prostate cancer treatment, *Mount Coolum*

Retired serviceman and mining industry worker, father-to-three and grandfather-to-five, Doug, 73, Mount Coolum, experienced erectile dysfunction (ED) following prostate cancer treatment in 2007.

ED is a common men's health¹ condition largely affecting those aged 40+ years,² and is a potential side-effect of prostate cancer surgery.^{3,4}

Doug has a family history of cancer. Both his father and brother battled the disease. Doug was therefore familiar with some of the potential risks, and side-effects of prostate cancer treatment. To learn more, and to secure invaluable support, he joined a local prostate cancer support group.



After developing ED following prostate cancer treatment, Doug trialed a plethora of ED treatment options, eventually selecting one best suited to him.

Despite enduring a prostate cancer relapse in 2016, and subsequent compromise to his sex drive, and various other challenges associated with ED, Doug nonetheless, maintained a positive outlook. He was simply, "happy to be alive".

Today, Doug has chosen to share his story to increase community awareness and understanding of ED, particularly following prostate cancer treatment, and to motivate Australian men to prioritise their health. He highlights the crucial role played by patient support networks, and advocates for men's sexual health to be prioritised, in line with [The Australian Government's National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030](#).⁵

This is Doug's story.

Doug has always proactively managed his health, attending annual health appointments and undergoing regular prostate cancer screening, including a yearly prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test – a common blood test that measures the level of PSA in the blood to help detect prostate cancer.

"From my military days, I was conditioned to stay on top of my health, and a yearly PSA test made all the difference.

"During an annual health check-up in 2006, I learned my PSA levels were elevated, and I was subsequently sent to a Urologist for further investigation," said Doug.

"I attended my appointment, had an examination, a biopsy, and then surgery to check the sample."

In June 2006, Doug was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

"When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, I wasn't really concerned about the potential treatment side-effects. It was the cancer diagnosis that proved devastating to me," Doug said.

After undergoing surgery and radiation treatment for prostate cancer, Doug was left with the life-compromising treatment side-effect – ED.

“Just the diagnosis and then surgical treatment was traumatising enough, but adding ED to my cancer diagnosis and treatment knocked me to the floor.

“Despite the physical and emotional toll of living with ED, I maintained a pragmatic attitude, and continued to focus on addressing my cancer,” said Doug.

Doug shares his experience after undergoing prostate cancer surgery.

“Before I had prostate cancer surgery, I was well informed that ED was a strong potential side-effect of treatment. So I was prepared for it.

“Given my surgery was quite invasive, and I had lost all sensation, I knew instantly I had developed ED,” Doug said.

“Although I often thought about my loss of sexual function, I cared more about being alive. That’s what ultimately mattered,” Doug said.

After speaking with his wife and doctor at length about living with ED following prostate cancer treatment, Doug was delighted to find a suitable, long-term treatment option for his condition that lasted for 10 years.

Unfortunately, in 2016, when Doug’s cancer returned, he was forced to confront ED again as well as other additional physical challenges.

Subsequently, Doug experienced a complete loss of libido and overtime accepted the reality of living with ED however maintained a positive outlook, with unconditional, ongoing support from his wife.

“My wife has been so supportive throughout my entire journey, from diagnosis, to treatment, side-effects of treatment, including ED, prostate cancer relapse, and more,” said Doug.

“We’ve always been able to talk about everything, and that helped us reach the best outcome for both of us. It’s brought us closer together, and we’ve adapted over time.

“Ultimately, I have battled and overcome prostate cancer twice, found excellent treatment options for the side effects for a decade and I am now happy to be alive. To me, that’s all that matters,” Doug said.

Heavily involved in his community, Doug joined a prostate cancer support group in 2006 to help him through his journey.

“Joining a prostate cancer support group was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

“Hearing from other men who’ve been through similar experiences gave me the strength to keep going,” said Doug.

“This group allowed me to talk to other men about living with ED. Being a part of this group helped me to overcome trauma, and to not feel alone.”

Today, Doug encourages men to prioritise their health, by visiting the doctor for annual health checks, seeking treatment proactively, and engaging in discussion on sexual health issues.

Doug’s story highlights the importance of resilience, the value of patient support networks, and the need for personalised treatment options for men facing similar health challenges.

He has a simple, but poignant message for other men living with ED.

“Seek treatment. While the journey may be difficult, the support and treatment options available today can make a significant difference to your quality of life.”

ends#

To coordinate an interview with Doug, please contact:

Kirsten Bruce or Sam Jacobs, VIVA! Communications

M 0401 717 566 | 0422 654 404

T 02 9968 3741 | 02 9968 1604

E kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au | sam@vivacommunications.com.au

References

1. Langarizadeh MA, Salary A, Tavakoli MR, Nejad BG, Fadaei S, Jahani Z, et al. An overview of the history, current strategies, and potential future treatment approaches in erectile dysfunction: a comprehensive review. *Sexual Medicine Reviews*. 2023;11(3):253-67.
2. Leslie SW, Sooriyamoorthy T. *Erectile Dysfunction*. StatPearls. Treasure Island (FL)2024.
3. HF - About ED fact sheet. Boston Scientific; 2019.
4. *Erectile dysfunction: a partner's point of view*. In: Scientific B, editor.: Boston Scientific; 2017.
5. *National Men's Health Strategy 2020 - 2030*. Australian Government Department of Health; 2019.