

Barry, 65

Online business owner, father and grandfather who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for 25 years, *ORANGE*

Online business owner, father-to-five boys, and grandfather-to-three, Barry, 65, Orange, was diagnosed with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or an enlarged prostate, in 1999, after wrestling with initial symptoms of the condition for a year.

Aged 40 at the time, Barry's enlarged prostate was identified via sonogram, together with tumours growing in his liver.

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

With no known family history of an enlarged prostate, Barry was unaware at the time, of just how significantly the condition would eventually compromise his quality of life.

For the ensuing 25 years, Barry juggled significant family and work-related commitments along with progressive symptoms of an enlarged prostate – frequent, and incomplete bladder emptying; a weak urine flow; persistent urination throughout the night; and minimal control over bladder and bowel movements.

These symptoms proved particularly “embarrassing and uncomfortable” for Barry whenever he prepared to leave home, and to socialise with friends. Over time, the symptoms imposed a heavy toll on Barry's physical and mental wellbeing, which forced him to ultimately, “retract from life”.

Finally this year, after trialling a series of treatments over the course of 25 years, Barry elected to undergo a non-invasive treatment for his enlarged prostate.

Today, he has chosen to share his story, to raise community awareness and understanding of the symptoms of an enlarged prostate, and to urge men nation-wide, to prioritise their health.

This is Barry's story.

Barry first showed symptoms of an enlarged prostate in 1999, while seeking medical attention for tumours growing on his liver.

“When my doctor performed a sonogram and discovered tumours growing in my liver, he also noticed I had an enlarged prostate,” said Barry.

Barry was subsequently diagnosed with an enlarged prostate.

“Over time, my symptoms grew progressively worse. Whenever I visited a restaurant with friends, I'd have to make eight or nine trips to the toilet, which left me feeling really uncomfortable.

“I also used to drive to Sydney to pick up items for work. During each trip I would have to stop on three to four occasions along the way,” Barry said.



"When returning home to Orange in the middle of the night with no restrooms open, this made things pretty awkward.

"Living with an enlarged prostate feels like the first nail in your coffin. It makes you realise you're not superman. It feels like the beginning of the end," said Barry.

Barry trialled various treatments over many years to address his "challenging symptoms", to no avail. This left him feeling extremely frustrated.

"My symptoms grew progressively worse over time, as my prostate continued to grow.

"The urgency to pee was my most challenging symptom. For a normal person, their body signals the need to pee, and they have enough time to visit the bathroom," Barry said.

"But when you have an enlarged prostate, especially one that was as large as mine, and you get a signal, you've only got a few seconds to find a toilet.

"This leaves you constantly thinking about the location of the nearest toilet, and how quickly you can reach it," said Barry.

Earlier this year, Barry chose to seek specialist medical advice.

"Eventually, I became a slave to the nearest toilet. Also, not being able to control my bladder made me feel like I was ageing fast.

"My symptoms were so frustrating. I just dealt with them for years because I was unaware of the dangers of living with an enlarged prostate," said Barry.

For Barry, his symptoms proved further confounding, given he was otherwise fit and well.

"I've led a healthy life. I exercise regularly, eat well, and take supplements. But developing an enlarged prostate was out of my control. There was nothing I could have done to have prevented it. It was depressing.

"In fact, my prostate was so large, that it pressed on nerves, and triggered further health issues. It affected my bowel movements, and intimate relations with my wife," Barry said.

"Eventually, I had to address it, because there was so much pressure on my urethra, I couldn't pee at all.

"That's when I finally contacted a urologist, and underwent a minimally invasive treatment earlier this year," said Barry.

According to Barry, a heavy stigma continues to weigh heavily on men's health.

"Aussie men are proud. The first sign of any men's health problem is considered a weakness, or compromising of our masculinity. So we tend to suffer in silence.

"That's why nowadays, I ask every man who I come across, about their prostate, because most men won't even discuss this with their partner," Barry said.

Barry has some simple, but poignant advice for Aussie men living with an enlarged prostate.

"If you're living with symptoms of an enlarged prostate, visit your GP before they get worse.

"Do your own research, and ask your doctor about available treatment options, including minimally invasive, for an enlarged prostate, and find a treatment that best suits you," said Barry.

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To coordinate an interview with Barry, please contact:

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