

Just diagnosed and wondering whether you should try a support group? A bit sceptical that they can help at all? Read how Jim's mind was changed...

*"I'm a firm advocate of support groups, but I wasn't always. Before being diagnosed I had preconceived ideas about them up to when I sceptically tried one 5 years ago. I then tried a few more for good measure and I've now ended up as a regular attender at two very different groups. I like both for different reasons and I've got loads out of going to them, not least making new friends and finding out stuff I'd never have got to hear about otherwise.*

*I have found them to be a bit like pubs because one big thing they have in common is that they're all different from each other. I mention that because I still meet people with cancer who've tried loads of different pubs but they've either never been to a support group at all or they've tried one, didn't like it so never went back, despite all the studies that show that people who do go are the ones who have better outcomes. I wonder how many of us would never go to a pub again based on just one that we didn't like?*

*Doctors and all the other health professionals are a massive part of the information equation with their years of training behind them and from their having read lots of books but, usually, they haven't had any type of cancer nor any of the treatments. That leaves them without the insight that can only come from personal experience. So, along with everything else that support groups provide, I've found them to be an invaluable forum of people with personal understanding of what I'm going through because they've been through similar themselves, and that complements what I get from my medical team.*

*Some groups are open to any man with prostate cancer, even if they're attached to a hospital. Others are just for that hospital's patients, but there are quite a few that aren't connected to any hospital. Whichever sort they are many groups encourage partners to come, too. If you don't like the first one you try, try another. Because there's at least one out there that will be your right up your street and, if you're not sure where to start, try this link: <https://www.tackleprostate.org/find-a-support-group-near-you.php>".*