

The logo for 'BOB tales' features the text 'BOB' in a large, bold, dark blue sans-serif font, followed by 'tales' in a smaller, lowercase, dark blue sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a red balloon with a white string. The background consists of several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of blue and green, creating a sense of movement and depth.

BOB tales

Brotherhood of the Balloon Member Newsletter | **June 2025**

"Artificial intelligence
is the new electricity."

— Andrew Ng

Dear Members (a note from Deb Hickey):

Not long ago, we were asking Alexa to play Frank Sinatra and feeling pretty impressed with ourselves. Now, artificial intelligence is composing music, driving cars, and may soon detect cancer before your doctor even orders a test. The future showed up fast—and it's *not* wearing a lab coat.

In this issue of *BOB Tales*, we look at four powerful new tools that use AI to detect cancer earlier, more accurately, and far less invasively. From urine tests that outperform PSA to an AI model that stages cancer better than MRI—there's even an AI-powered test that can detect more than 50 types of cancer from a single blood draw.

What's coming down the pipeline might just change everything!

And AI isn't the only frontier worth watching. Researchers have recently found that a humble mushroom might help slow the progression of prostate cancer. Meanwhile, two new studies have brought Parkinson's disease into focus from very different angles. One found that people living near golf courses—especially those with municipal water wells nearby—were more than twice as likely to develop Parkinson's. The other highlights how a specific form of magnesium may support brain health and potentially reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's.

This month's issue spans the cutting edge to the everyday—from AI models and high-tech diagnostics to mushrooms, minerals, and what's on your plate. Wherever you are on your journey, there's something here that could inform, inspire, or impact your health.

In other news, it was recently announced that former President Biden has aggressive prostate cancer. This raises important questions—not just about timing, but about how and when the disease is typically detected.

This high-profile case, along with the recent diagnosis of Scott Adams—creator of the Dilbert comic strip—who is also facing late-stage aggressive prostate cancer, serves as a powerful reminder of why regular prostate cancer screening is so important. Too many men are diagnosed late, or not at all, simply because they didn't know their options or didn't know the right questions to ask. That's where communities like ours can make a difference. And we're also wondering—could theranostics help former President Biden?

Theranostics, which we've highlighted in several past newsletters, combines diagnostics and targeted therapy to locate and destroy cancer cells. It offers hope for men with advanced, metastatic, or recurrent prostate cancer—cases like Biden's—that traditionally have been treated systemically with hormonal therapy, chemotherapy, radiation, or immunotherapy. The goal of those treatments is often to slow disease progression rather than cure it. But theranostics could change that outlook for many.

Let's use this time to spread awareness, encourage screening, and share knowledge about life-changing advancements like theranostics with others who may not know this kind of hope exists.

As always, we welcome any suggestions you have for making the *BOB Tales* more valuable to members. Please send your feedback to DHickey@protonbob.com.

Deb Hickey



- [The Stage One Cancer Revolution](#)
- [AI Tool Beats MRI in Predicting Prostate Cancer Spread](#)
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The Stage One Cancer Detection Revolution

Cancer remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide, particularly among seniors. In the U.S. alone, almost 2 million new cases are expected annually, with individuals over 65 accounting for the majority. *Early detection is critical:* survival rates for cancers like breast, prostate, and lung cancer are dramatically higher when caught at Stage 1. For example, breast and prostate cancers have 99% survival rates when detected early, but drop to 32% and 37% respectively if caught late. Lung cancer shows an even more dramatic decline, from a 65% survival rate at Stage 1 to just 5% at Stage 4.

However, traditional screening methods have major limitations, especially for cancers that don't show symptoms until advanced stages, like brain cancer. Fortunately, a major breakthrough has emerged: [a revolutionary blood test called Galleri](#), developed by Grail Inc., that can detect over 50 types of cancer at their earliest stages from a simple blood draw.



The Galleri test works by analyzing methylation patterns on cell-free DNA in the bloodstream—biological markers that can indicate the presence of cancer. Using advanced AI algorithms, the test can not only detect cancer signals but also predict the tissue of origin, allowing doctors to locate the cancer before it spreads.

Galleri's performance is impressive, with a 99.5% specificity rate, meaning false positives are extremely rare. It doubles the

news briefs

Proton Therapy Expands Across the Globe

Access to proton therapy is expanding, with new proton therapy centers underway across the U.S. and abroad. [Vietnam's Ministry of Health](#) plans to build three centers—one each in the north, central, and south—by 2030 to reduce the need for patients to travel overseas for care.

In the U.S., several major projects are in motion. In Connecticut, construction on [Danbury Proton](#), the state's second center, will begin this summer.

In Philadelphia, [Penn Medicine](#) has broken ground on its fourth proton site—a \$224 million center at Penn Presbyterian—set to open in late 2027.

[Nebraska Medicine](#) is also entering the field, building its first proton unit at the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center in Omaha. The \$36 million project will serve a six-state region, with care expected to begin in spring 2027.

number of cancers that can be screened through routine testing and enables early intervention, significantly improving patient outcomes. The early detection made possible by Galleri could save countless lives, especially among seniors, the population most vulnerable to cancer.

The test currently costs \$949 and is typically not covered by medical insurance. The U.S. Congress is reviewing a bill, H.R. 2407, that would make the Galleri test eligible for Medicare coverage. If passed, this could bring widespread, affordable access to early cancer screening for millions of older Americans. With Medicare covering the cost, Galleri could help detect cancers early in hundreds of thousands of seniors every year, drastically improving survival rates across the country.

Galleri's development has been years in the making, backed by Grail's extensive research efforts and data collection. The company's massive database of methylation patterns, gathered through partnerships and clinical trials, forms the foundation of this groundbreaking detection method. Galleri represents one of the most significant advances in the early detection of cancer in decades, offering hope for a future where a cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence—but a survivable event if caught in time.

In short, Galleri has the potential to revolutionize cancer care by shifting detection to the earliest, most treatable stages—saving countless lives through a simple, minimally invasive blood test.

AI Tool Beats MRI in Predicting Prostate Cancer Spread

In our [September 2024 BOB Tales](#), we shared early findings on [Unfold AI](#), an FDA-cleared software tool that uses artificial intelligence to map and predict the location of prostate cancer within the prostate gland. The study showed that Unfold AI detected tumors with 84% accuracy—compared to 67% for physicians using standard imaging methods such as multiparametric MRI. This suggests the software may improve tumor localization and support more precise, targeted treatment.

[New research](#) shows the tool may also outperform MRI in *staging* prostate cancer. Specifically, Unfold AI was used to determine whether cancer had spread to the seminal

vesicles—a critical factor in assessing disease severity and selecting treatment. In two patient groups at UCLA and Stanford, Unfold AI correctly identified seminal vesicle invasion with 92% accuracy, while MRI alone achieved just 52%.

The software itself hasn't changed. Rather, this research builds on the earlier findings by applying Unfold AI to a more advanced and clinically significant task. By combining MRI scans with clinical data to generate a 3D map of cancer within and around the prostate, the tool helps physicians diagnose and stage disease with greater precision—and tailor treatments accordingly.

These results further establish Unfold AI as a powerful decision-support tool that may reduce misdiagnoses, improve surgical and radiation planning, and support more personalized prostate cancer care.

Urine Test More Accurate than PSA

In a potential [breakthrough for prostate cancer screening](#), Swedish researchers have developed a urine-based test that uses artificial intelligence to analyze gene expression patterns—detecting both the presence and aggressiveness of prostate cancer more accurately than the traditional PSA blood test.

The non-invasive method, tested on more than 2,000 men, showed high accuracy in identifying cancer-specific biomarkers and determining tumor grade, potentially reducing unnecessary biopsies caused by PSA's low specificity.

“It’s painless, accurate, and relatively cheap,” said lead author Martin Smelik of Karolinska Institutet. Experts praised the findings, noting that the field hasn’t seen a major advancement in decades.

Unlike more targeted tools like the MyProstateScore 2.0 (MPS2)—covered in the following article and focused only on high-grade cancer—this test, still in the research phase, aims to detect and grade all forms of prostate cancer.



Urine Test Specifically Targets Aggressive Prostate Cancer

In a major advancement for prostate cancer detection, U.S. researchers have validated a urine test designed to flag only the most dangerous forms of the disease—aggressive, high-grade cancers that often require treatment. Unlike traditional methods like the PSA blood test, which can lead to false positives and unnecessary biopsies, this test analyzes the expression patterns of 18 genes associated specifically with high-grade prostate cancer.

Called MyProstateScore 2.0 (MPS2), the test is designed to detect aggressive forms of the disease more accurately than current screening tools. What sets MPS2 apart is its ability not only to identify prostate cancer but also to assess its potential severity—offering a more precise and personalized approach to diagnosis. We first reported on this promising platform in our [June 2024 BOB Tales](#).

Experts unaffiliated with the study praised the findings, noting that prostate cancer screening hasn't seen a major advance in decades. While further research is underway, MPS2 could mark a turning point in early detection—improving outcomes for those at highest risk while helping to avoid overtreatment in men with indolent disease.

Unlike broader screening tools that may detect a range of prostate cancers—including slow-growing types that may never require treatment—MPS2 is specifically designed to pinpoint the most dangerous, high-grade cases.

Although the results are encouraging, the test is still in the research phase and not yet available for clinical use.

Can Mushrooms Help Fight Prostate Cancer?

[New research](#) from City of Hope Cancer Center suggests that a common grocery store item may help slow the progression of prostate cancer: white button mushroom extract was found to reduce immune-suppressing cells that help tumors grow, in both mice and a small group of prostate cancer patients.

Scientists believe the benefit comes from beta-glucans—immune-boosting compounds found in mushrooms. While this isn't a green light to start popping mushroom supplements, the study offers exciting potential for a natural, low-cost way to support prostate cancer treatment.

More research is underway, but this “superfood” could one day be part of a bigger cancer-fighting strategy.



flashback

We've been publishing *BOB Tales* for nearly 25 years, sharing thousands of articles—many of which our newer members haven't seen, and longtime members may have forgotten or would appreciate revisiting. That's why we regularly reprint articles from past issues that we believe are still relevant and carry an important message. The following article, written by Bob Marckini, appeared in our December 2007 issue.

Misdiagnosed: The Critical Importance of a Second Opinion

ABC News [published a story](#) last month about a 33-year-old woman who was told she had breast cancer and had a double mastectomy. Four months later, the hospital called her to tell her they had messed up: She never had cancer and she didn't need to have her breasts removed after all. It turned out to be a lab error.

A few months ago, a man recently diagnosed with prostate cancer was scheduled for radical prostatectomy. He stumbled on to my book two weeks before his scheduled surgery. He read the part about having a second pathology lab check your slides; so he chose a lab from the book appendix and sent in his slides. A few days later he learned he didn't have cancer at all! Can you imagine learning this after the operation? He later wrote a very positive review of my book (first edition) on Amazon.

Bottom line: Before you choose a treatment, make sure you have the right diagnosis. These real-life stories are powerful reminders that pathology errors do happen—and the consequences can be life-altering. A second opinion on your slides could spare you from unnecessary, invasive procedures and give you peace of mind. It's a simple step that could change everything.



spotlight on members

BOB Member's Proton Therapy Presentation Draws Praise

BOB member and 22-year prostate cancer survivor Don Giffels recently delivered a compelling presentation on his cancer journey to a crowd of men at The Glenridge on Palmer Ranch, a continuing care community in Sarasota, FL.

Using the BOB's PowerPoint presentation—customized with his personal story and statistics—Don walked attendees through his diagnosis and experience with proton therapy, which he received at Loma Linda University Cancer Center in 2006 following a failed prostatectomy.

During his talk, Don also introduced attendees to Bob Marckini's book, *You Can Beat Prostate Cancer*, which he described as an invaluable resource for those facing a diagnosis. He highlighted the book's practical guidance and empowering message, encouraging audience members to read it and share it with others.

Don also spoke about some of the latest innovations at LLUCC, including theranostics, CAR T-cell therapy, and boron neutron capture therapy—advancements we've featured in recent *BOB Tales* issues.

The audience response was overwhelmingly positive. Two medical doctors who had previously presented to the same community on cancer biology attended the talk and praised Don's presentation as accurate, informative, and engaging. But perhaps the most meaningful feedback came afterward.

“In the three days following my talk, at least 15 people have personally reached out to thank me for sharing my story and for introducing them to proton therapy,” Don said. “Word has spread throughout the community, and I’ve even been invited to dinner to talk more about it!”



Don expressed deep gratitude to Bob Marckini for his guidance and longtime support: “I can’t thank you enough for your support for the presentation—and for your support over all these years since my treatment in 2006,” Don said.

Photo: Don Giffels presents to men at The Glenridge on Palmer Ranch, Sarasota, FL

When we asked if we could include this story in a newsletter, Don said he’d be honored—and then added: “By the way, I continue to get kudos for my presentation. Thank you for making me a hero around here!”

We’re on Facebook—Are You?

More older adults are using Facebook than ever—nearly half of those 65+ and about 70% of those aged 50–64, [according to Pew Research](#). Why? It’s a fun, easy way to stay informed about topics that interest you, reconnect with old friends (even those you haven’t spoken to in decades), and be part of a community.

If you haven’t joined the [BOB Facebook page](#), you’re missing out! We post early-access newsletter articles, member stories, photos, and timely news on proton therapy, prostate cancer, and men’s health. You can join the conversation by commenting to share your experiences—or simply follow along to stay connected.

Stay informed and connected—[follow the BOB on Facebook!](#)



making a difference by giving back

Changing Lives, Cell by Cell

June 19 marks [World Sickle Cell Day](#), a time to raise awareness about a disease that affects thousands of families in the U.S., particularly within the Black and Hispanic communities. While sickle cell disease (SCD) often flies under the radar, it causes immense suffering—frequent hospitalizations, severe pain, and shortened life expectancy for many patients.

Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital (LLUCH) is making extraordinary strides in changing that narrative. Their Pediatric Sickle Cell Center, established in 2017 and now serving over 300 patients annually, was recently named a national [Sickle Cell Center of Excellence](#)—one of fewer than 30 in the country. Beyond treatment, LLUCH is leading the way in education, advocacy, and research, helping providers and communities better understand and care for patients living with this painful genetic condition.

Our members know LLUCC as the birthplace of hospital-based proton therapy. But the pioneering spirit lives on across many areas. Beyond the groundbreaking *Stronger Together* cancer initiative we’ve discussed in several *BOB Tales* newsletters, exciting advancements are now underway in pediatric hematology. This work highlights what makes Loma Linda University Health such a remarkable, mission-driven institution.

When you give back to Loma Linda University Health, you’re fueling innovation, compassion, and groundbreaking care in areas that desperately need it. Whether you’ve donated in the past, set up a bequest, or are considering a future gift, know that your generosity helps change—and save—lives far beyond your own.

Giving Options

- **Online:** [Donate here](#). From the pull-down menu, choose where you’d like to direct your gift — 1) Cancer Center Vision; 2) Proton Research through the *James M. Slater Chair*; 3) Proton Research through the *Robert J. Marckini Chair*; or 4) Other (specify any area you’d like your gift directed)

- **By Check:** Make your check out to “LLUCC.” Specify where you’d like to direct your gift in the memo line — 1) Cancer Center Vision, 2) *Slater Chair*, 3) *Marckini Chair*, or 4) write “unrestricted” so LLUH can use it where it’s needed most. Mail to: LLUH, Office of Philanthropy P.O. Box 2000, Loma Linda, CA 92354.
- **By Phone:** Call Regina Joseph at 909-558-5010.



health

Could Living Near a Golf Course Raise Your Risk of Parkinson’s?

A [new study](#) is challenging our perception of peaceful, green fairways. Researchers from several institutions, including the Mayo Clinic and Barrow Neurological Institute, have found a surprising link between proximity to golf courses and an increased risk of Parkinson’s disease (PD).

The large population-based study looked at more than 5,500 people in Minnesota over a 24-year period. After adjusting for factors like age, income, and whether someone lived in a rural or urban setting, the researchers discovered that people who lived within one mile of a golf course had more than double the odds of developing Parkinson’s compared to those who lived more than six miles away.

Even more striking: those who lived in water service areas containing a golf course had almost twice the risk of developing the disease than people living in areas without one. The risk appeared to be especially high in regions where groundwater is more vulnerable to contamination—and in places where municipal wells were located directly on golf course property.

What’s driving this association? The study’s authors believe pesticide exposure may play a key role. Golf courses are known for their intensive maintenance, which often involves



heavy pesticide use. The theory is that chemicals may be entering the air and local drinking water, potentially contributing to neurodegeneration.

However, not everyone agrees. Experts at Parkinson's UK, a nonprofit unaffiliated with the research, caution that while there may be a correlation, it doesn't prove causation. Parkinson's is a complex disease with no single known cause. Genetics, industrial exposure, and other environmental factors are also in the mix. And this particular study didn't test the water or air for chemical contamination, leaving some important questions unanswered.

Still, the findings add to growing concerns about pesticide exposure in everyday environments—not just on farms or in industrial areas, but in seemingly serene suburban spaces. As research evolves, so does the conversation about how we define “safe” communities and the invisible factors that may influence our health.

This Magnesium May Boost Brain Health and Prevent Parkinson's



According to [HealthDigest.com](https://www.healthdigest.com), magnesium is a vital mineral that plays a role in hundreds of processes in the body, including energy production and brain function. While most people get enough from food, those over 65, with type 2 diabetes, or who consume a lot of alcohol may not be getting enough. Signs of low magnesium include fatigue, poor appetite, and muscle spasms.

One special form—magnesium L-threonate—may be particularly beneficial for brain health. Unlike other forms, it's been shown to increase magnesium levels in the brain. Research in mice with Parkinson's-like damage suggests this boost may reduce inflammation and help protect brain cells.

Magnesium helps regulate brain receptors (called NMDA receptors) that are important for memory and learning. When these receptors are too active, they can damage brain

cells, possibly leading to conditions like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. Studies link low magnesium to a higher risk of Parkinson's, though magnesium is not yet used as a treatment.

What makes magnesium L-threonate unique is its ability to cross into the brain more effectively than other forms. A study in *Neuron* found that it outperformed other types like magnesium citrate and chloride, improving learning and memory in lab animals.

Magnesium L-threonate may also help the brain through the gut. People with Alzheimer's often have an unhealthy gut microbiome. A [recent study](#) showed that mice with Alzheimer's who were fed magnesium L-threonate had healthier gut bacteria, stronger gut linings, and lower inflammation—suggesting a link between gut and brain health.

For even better results, combining magnesium L-threonate with vitamins B6, C, and D may enhance absorption and brain benefits. A [2022 study](#) showed that older adults who took such a supplement saw noticeable improvements in memory and thinking skills.

While magnesium is essential for everyone, magnesium L-threonate might offer unique benefits for the brain— supporting memory, protecting neurons, and even promoting a healthier gut. As research continues, this targeted form of magnesium shows promise for those looking to maintain cognitive health as they age.

The Food Fueling a Rise in Cancer—Even in Teens

Colorectal cancer, once thought to be a disease of older adults, is now striking teens and young adults with alarming frequency. Doctors are seeing cases in patients as young as 16! So concerning is this trend that screening now begins at age 45, not 50.



What's driving this rise? Experts point to a combination of factors—genetics, lifestyle, obesity, gut health, and environmental exposures—but [processed meats](#) are emerging as a particularly worrisome culprit.

What counts as processed meat? Bacon, hot dogs, sausage, deli meat—even frozen meatballs and chicken nuggets. These foods are often preserved with nitrites, which, once digested, can form cancer-causing compounds. Cooking methods like grilling can make things worse by producing additional harmful chemicals.

The World Health Organization classifies processed meats as a Group 1 carcinogen—on par with tobacco. Eating just one hot dog or a few slices of bacon daily may raise your colorectal cancer risk by 18%.

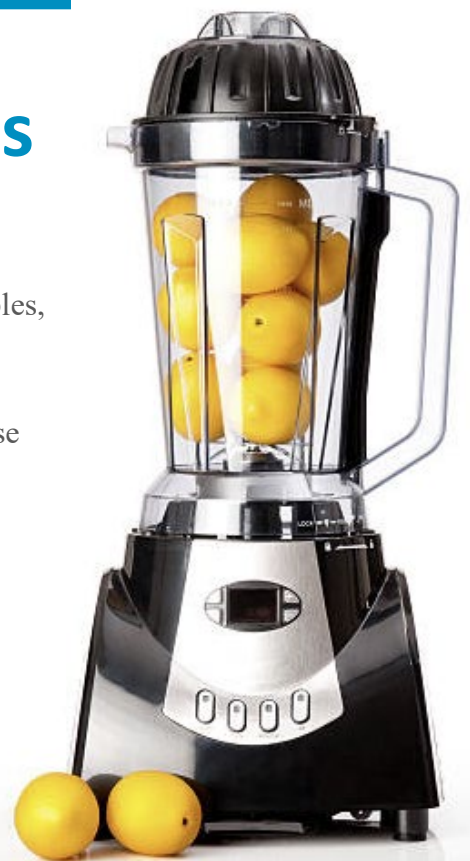
This doesn't mean you have to swear off hot dogs forever, but experts agree: *moderation is key*. Cut back where you can. Choose whole foods more often. Swap deli meats for turkey, beans, or plant-based proteins. And when you do eat processed meat, think of it as a treat—not a daily habit.

8 Surprising Superfoods Hiding in Plain Sight

While many people instinctively peel their fruits and vegetables, those discarded skins often hold [powerful nutritional value](#). Dietitians reveal that certain produce peels are rich in fiber, antioxidants, vitamins, and health-boosting compounds. These often-overlooked parts can promote heart health, immunity, digestion, and even youthful skin. Here are eight of the best produce peels to eat—and how to enjoy them:

1. **Kiwi:** Go for the smooth-skinned SunGold variety if you're not into fuzz. Slice it thin for salads, blend whole into smoothies, or scoop it like a soft-boiled egg. This doubles the fiber and adds vitamin E, C, and anti-inflammatory polyphenols.

Broth



2. **Tomato:** Keep the skin on when roasting or sautéing. For sauces, skip the peeling step—just blend it smooth. Benefits include 2.5 times more lycopene than pulp, great for skin health and collagen support.
3. **Citrus:** Zest lemons, limes, and oranges into drinks, salad dressings, marinades, or desserts. You can also candy the peels or blend them into smoothies for a zingy kick. They're packed with fiber, vitamin C, antioxidants, and immune-boosting polyphenols.
4. **Potato:** Roast with the skin on for a crispy texture. You can also mash them with skins intact or make homemade chips. Benefits include higher potassium, vitamin C, folate, fiber, and collagen-boosting compounds.
5. **Carrot:** Just scrub them clean—no need to peel! Slice raw, roast, or juice them whole. Carrots are loaded with beta-carotene, polyacetylenes, and antioxidants for vision, skin, and immune support.
6. **Apple:** Eat raw, bake into crisps, or blend into smoothies with the peel on. They are rich in fiber, vitamin C, potassium, and plant compounds like quercetin for heart health and disease prevention.
7. **Grape:** Most people just eat them whole, and that's perfect! Or freeze with skin on for a fun snack or smoothie add-in. Grape skins contain resveratrol and flavonoids for anti-aging, anti-inflammatory, and heart-protective perks.
8. **Watermelon:** Eat the rind! Pickle it, stir-fry it, dice into salads, or blend into smoothies. The rind contains citrulline for better circulation, plus fiber, vitamins C and B6.

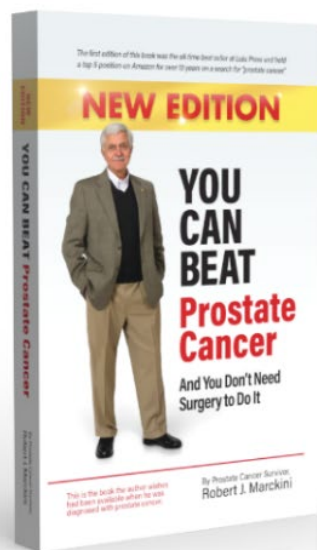
Always wash your produce thoroughly (with a [veggie wash](#) or vinegar soak) to remove pesticides or grime before eating the skins. When in doubt, choose organic if you plan to eat the peel.

Lastly, *not all peels are safe to eat*. While many fruit and veggie skins are packed with fiber, antioxidants, and nutrients, some can be tough, bitter, or even irritating to the body. The most important peel to avoid is mango, as it contains urushiol—the same compound found in poison ivy. It can cause allergic reactions (itchy lips, rash, etc.), even if you're not usually sensitive.



the book

You Can Beat Prostate Cancer: And You Don't Need Surgery to Do It



No. 1 on Amazon!

As of this writing, Bob's second edition book has claimed the top spot on Amazon—*outperforming more than 7,000 books* on prostate cancer, including the long-standing bestseller by Dr. Patrick Walsh. With a combined 813 reviews across both editions and an average rating of five stars, it's clear the book continues to educate, empower, and inspire men on their prostate cancer journeys.

Real Words from Real Readers

Bob's book continues to resonate with men and families navigating prostate cancer. The thoughtful, heartfelt feedback keeps coming in. Here's a recent review by "DWR."



You have choices regarding what prostate treatment you receive. This book helps with that choice.

This book was incredibly informative about the various treatment options for prostate cancer. My brother was treated 10 years ago with proton therapy and he made sure I had a copy of this book. This book, along with some research of my own, convinced me that proton radiation therapy is the best choice for me.

Did Bob's book help you? *Your review matters.*

When someone is diagnosed with cancer, one of the first things they do is search for answers. A study in *The American Journal of Managed Care* found that 89% of people turn to the internet for information after a diagnosis—40% on the very same day.

And where do many land? **Amazon.** With more than 3 billion visitors each month and listings that appear at the top of search results, it's often a first stop.

That's why reviews are so important. Research shows that 91% of consumers read them, and 84% trust them as much as personal recommendations—especially when making decisions as serious as cancer treatment.

If Bob's book helped you, consider taking just a few minutes to [write a review](#). It might be the very thing that helps someone else find clarity, hope, and the path that's right for them.

Your voice can make a difference. Thank you for using it.



on the lighter side

Last Month's Brain Teaser

You're escaping a labyrinth, and there are three exits. Exit A leads to an inferno. Exit B leads to an assassin. Exit C leads to a lion that hasn't eaten in 3 years. Which exit do you pick?

Answer: Exit C: If a lion hasn't eaten in 3 years, it has definitely starved to death.

Winner: Congratulations to Larry Klote of Leawood, KS—winner of our May 2025 Brain Teaser!

After years of monitoring a fluctuating PSA, Larry took things more seriously when his numbers spiked in late 2021. While his levels eventually dropped again, they continued to bounce around, prompting careful observation and regular testing. In 2024, a biopsy confirmed prostate cancer.



Larry and his wife Judy in Eidfjord, Norway in cold water suits after a “rib boat tour”

The diagnosis wasn’t a complete surprise but motivated Larry to explore his treatment options more thoroughly. He spoke with men who’d chosen different therapies, researched extensively online, and even considered surgery at one point. However, after a neighbor gave him a copy of *You Can Beat Prostate Cancer*—which he read cover to cover (twice!)—Larry decided on proton therapy.

He began treatment at the Kansas City Proton Institute in December 2024 and completed it just a month later. “It was an excellent experience,” he said.

Larry, now retired from a career as a power engineer, is enjoying life with his wife, Judy. They recently returned from a Baltic Sea cruise.

“Thanks to Bob for starting the ‘BOB,’ and to Deb for carrying the torch—so more men can learn about this life-saving treatment,” Larry said.

New Brain Teaser

What can be swallowed but can also swallow you?

Send your answer to DHickey@protonbob.com for a chance to win a signed copy of Bob Marckini’s second edition book, [*You Can Beat Prostate Cancer*](#).

Senior Humor

I finally got my head together... now my body is falling apart.

At my age, getting lucky means walking into a room and remembering what I came in for.

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

I don't do pushups. I push the ground away from me.

They say you are what you eat. I don't remember eating so much cottage cheese.

I finally got eight hours of sleep. Took me three nights, but I did it.

I don't need a personal trainer. I need someone to follow me around and slap unhealthy food out of my hand.

You know you're aging disgracefully when your new hobby is Googling your symptoms and diagnosing yourself with 'probably fine.'

I've reached the age where I don't need an alarm clock—my bladder does the job just fine.

My daughter said I need a password with 8 characters... so I picked "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

My brain is like an internet browser—17 tabs open, 5 frozen, and I have no idea where the music is coming from.

I opened Instagram and accidentally live-streamed my ceiling fan for 15 minutes. Got three followers and a marriage proposal.

Celebrity Visits Nursing Home

One day, a celebrity visited a nursing home to bring smiles to the residents. As soon as he arrived, everyone greeted him warmly—after all, they all recognized him from TV. But one man didn't approach or say a word. Curious, the celebrity went over and asked, "Do you know who I am?" The old man looked up and replied, "No, but you can check with the front desk—they'll tell you."



odds & ends

The Cleanest Seat on a Plane, According to Science

To reduce your chances of catching germs while flying, the seat with the best view might also be your safest bet. Experts agree: [the window seat](#) isn't just great for looking at the clouds—it helps keep you away from the cabin's germiest hotspots. Unlike aisle seats, where you're exposed to every passing passenger and beverage cart, the window seat provides a buffer from all the traffic and touchpoints that spread germs.

And once you've claimed your seat, the next step is to wipe down everything around you—tray table, armrests, seatbelt buckle, and any other surfaces you might touch—with disinfectant wipes.

And another tip? Stay put. Experts advise staying in your seat as much as possible. Moving around the cabin increases your risk of encountering airborne viruses and contaminated surfaces, so minimize trips unless absolutely necessary. If you must get up, be extra cautious. And if you must use the restroom, bring your wipes! Airplane bathrooms are notorious germ hotspots, so if you forget your wipes, don't touch faucet handles or door latches directly—use a paper towel, tissue, or even your sleeve.

Wearing a mask, especially if someone nearby is coughing or sneezing, adds another layer of protection when flying. Staying hydrated also helps keep your immune system strong, so sip water throughout the flight.

By choosing the window seat and following these precautions, you can dramatically lower your chances of bringing home more than just memories.



They're Listening: What Your Smart Devices Know About You

It may sound like science fiction, but it's real—and invasive. Your smart phones, speakers, thermostats, fridges, even your air fryer may be quietly collecting data about your habits, conversations, and health. Lawmakers are now pushing for transparency. Shouldn't you know if your kitchen appliances have cameras or microphones?

Momentum is building: [New legislation](#) is advancing to require clear labels on smart devices that record or listen. According to cybersecurity expert Dr. Murat Kantarcioglu (UT Dallas), these devices collect user data to fuel hyper-targeted ads. "If your fridge notices you're out of eggs, you'll get ads for eggs," he says. But the implications go far beyond groceries—private conversations could trigger health-related ads, and an unopened fridge could suggest you're not home.

Marketing expert Alexander Edsel warns companies are now [predicting your behavior](#), using data from smart devices, purchase history, weather, and even biometrics to shape what you buy—and what you pay for insurance or healthcare. In New York, some life insurers are already using online behavior to assess risk. A paragliding photo or evidence of a preference for junk food could raise your premiums!

In response, the U.S. has introduced a [Cyber Trust Mark](#) to help consumers identify devices with strong privacy protections, and a House bill supports mandatory disclosure of surveillance features in smart tech.

But until protections are widespread, experts urge caution: Check your devices, read the fine print, and secure your home network. That "smart" tech may be learning more about you than you realize.



Quote of the Month

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." — Ralph Waldo Emerson



final thought

Drive Safely: You May Save a Life

Jack took a long look at his speedometer before slowing down: 73 in a 55 zone. Fourth time in as many months. How could a guy get caught so often? When his car slowed to 10 miles an hour, Jack pulled over, but only partially. Let the cop worry about the potential traffic hazard! The cop was stepping out of his car, the big pad in hand.

Bob? Bob from Church? Jack sunk farther into his trench coat. This was worse than the coming ticket. A cop catching a guy from his own church! A guy who happened to be a little eager to get home after a long day at the office. A guy he was about to play golf with tomorrow. Jumping out of the car, Jack approached a man he saw every Sunday, a man he'd never seen in uniform. "Hi, Bob. Fancy meeting you like this," he said.

"Hello, Jack." No smile.

"Guess you caught me. I'm in a rush to see my wife and kids."

"Yeah, I guess." Bob seemed uncertain. Good.

"I've seen some long days at the office lately. I'm afraid I bent the rules a bit... just this once." Jack toed at a pebble on the pavement. "Diane said something about roast beef and potatoes tonight. Know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean. I also know that you have a reputation in our precinct."

Ouch. This was not going in the right direction. Time to change tactics. “What’d you clock me at?” Jack asked.

“Seventy,” answered Bob. “Would you go back and sit back in your car please?”

“Now wait a minute here, Bob. I checked as soon as I saw you. I was barely nudging 65,” Jack said. The lie seemed to come easier with every ticket.

“Please, Jack—sit in the car.”

Flustered, Jack hunched himself through the still-open door. Slamming it shut, he stared at the dashboard. He was in no rush to open the window. The minutes ticked by. Bob scribbled away on the pad. Why hadn’t he asked for a driver’s license? Whatever the reason, it would be a month of Sundays before Jack ever sat near this cop again.

A tap on the door jerked his head to the left. There was Bob, a folded paper in hand Jack rolled down the window a mere two inches, just enough room for Bob to pass him the slip. “Thanks.” Jack could not quite keep the sneer out of his voice.

Bob returned to his cruiser without a word. Jack watched his retreat in the mirror and then unfolded the sheet of paper. How much was this one going to cost? Wait a minute. What was this? Some kind of joke? Certainly not a ticket. Jack began to read:

Dear Jack,

Once upon a time I had a daughter. She was six when she was killed by a car. You guessed it—a speeding driver. A fine and three months in jail, and the man was free. Free to hug his daughters, all three of them. I only had one, and I’m going to have to wait until heaven before I can ever hug her again. A thousand times I’ve tried to forgive that man. A thousand times I thought I had. Maybe I did, but I need to do it again. Even now. Pray for me. And be careful, Jack.

—Bob

Jack turned around in time to see Bob's car pull away and head down the road. Jack watched until it disappeared. A full 15 minutes later, he too, pulled away and drove slowly home, praying for forgiveness and hugging a surprised wife and kids when he arrived.

Life is precious. Handle with care. This is an important message; please pass it along to your friends. Drive safely and carefully. Remember, cars are not the only things recalled by their maker.

Low PSAs to all,

Bob Marckini and Deb Hickey



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