

Prostate cancer — Know the facts

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in America. One in every six American men has it.¹ Read on to see if you're at risk. Plus, learn how it's detected, diagnosed and treated.

What is the prostate?

The prostate is a small gland in men that is part of the reproductive system. It's about the shape and size of a walnut. The prostate rests below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It surrounds part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. The prostate helps make semen, which carries sperm from the testicles when a man ejaculates.

Are you at risk for prostate cancer?

Many men with prostate cancer don't have symptoms until their cancer gets worse. That's why you should know your risks:

- **Age** – More than two out of every three prostate cancers are found in men over 65.^{1,2}
- **Family history** – Men with two or more relatives with prostate cancer are more than four times as likely to have it themselves. And, men whose relatives were diagnosed before age 65 run the most risk.^{1,2}
- **Race** – African American men get prostate cancer at a rate 56 percent higher than Caucasians. They are also more than twice as likely to die from it.¹

- **Weight** – Obesity can lead to a delay in diagnosis, longer recovery from surgery and a higher risk of death.¹
- **Diet** – Men who eat a diet high in animal fat may have a higher risk. Those whose diets are higher in fruits and vegetables may have a lower risk.²

Did you know?

A man is more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer than a woman is to be diagnosed with breast cancer.¹

Detection and diagnosis

Most men will not notice any symptoms, especially if their cancer is caught in its early stages. But, men who do notice symptoms report some of the following:¹

- Urinating a lot, particularly at night
- Trouble starting or controlling urination, weak or interrupted flow, or painful urination
- Difficulty having an erection
- Painful ejaculation, or blood or urine in semen
- Pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs

When there are no symptoms, prostate cancer can be found during a routine digital rectal exam (DRE) or prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. The blood test screens for raised levels of PSA, a protein made by the prostate. The American Cancer Society suggests that you get both tests every year after age 50.¹ If something unusual is found, a small piece of tissue may be removed to check for cancer. This is called a biopsy.

Treatment options

When caught early, nine in ten prostate cancers can be cured.¹ Treatments include:¹

- **Checking the cancer for signs that it is getting worse.** Since prostate cancer is a slow-growing cancer, sometimes men will not have treatment at this early stage to avoid the side effects.
- **Radical prostatectomy.** The prostate gland and some nearby tissue are removed. There is a chance of sexual and urinary problems.
- **Radiation.** Radioactive beams or metal pellets kill the cancer cells.
- **Hormone therapy.** The prostate cancer growth is slowed and testosterone levels are lowered. But, it's only short term and there are unwanted side effects.
- **Chemotherapy.** This treatment is suggested if the cancer has spread beyond the prostate area, to other parts of the body.



Resources

Call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at **800-4-CANCER** (800-422-6237) for information on prostate cancer. Or, visit the National Cancer Institute's website at **cancer.gov** and get live, online assistance through LiveHelp.

For tips on speaking with your doctor about prostate cancer, visit the Prostate Cancer Foundation site at **prostatecancerfoundation.org**. Click any of the "Quick Links" on the left. Then, look for the "Questions to Ask Your Doctor" option on the left-hand side of the page.

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Sources

1 Prostate Cancer Foundation, An Introduction to Prostate Cancer (2011): prostatecancerfoundation.org

2 U.S. National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, What You Need To Know About Prostate Cancer (2011): cancer.gov

3 Men's Health Network, Prostate Health Guide (2011): prostatehealthguide.com

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