

Prostate Cancer Awareness

Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

What is Prostate Cancer?

The prostate, typically the size of a walnut, is located in the male body just below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It is important that men know about the normal development and purpose of the prostate. While not essential for life, the prostate is vital for reproduction. Prostate cancer, a very slow growing disease, is the most common form of cancer in men. Over 200,000 men in the U.S. will be told by their doctor that they have prostate cancer. Even more alarming; about 30,000 men will die from this disease each year. ⁽¹⁾ But the most crucial thing to understand about prostate cancer is if it is detected early enough, it may be cured. In order to help ensure early detection, understanding the symptoms and risk factors is important. ⁽²⁾

What are the Symptoms of Prostate Cancer?

In the early stages of prostate cancer, symptoms are usually non-existent. In fact, many times, it is first detected by a doctor during a routine or preventive check-up. For some men, however, there will be changes in urinary or sexual function that all males should pay attention to as these symptoms could be an indication of prostate cancer. Consult your doctor if you encounter any of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty urinating, interrupted flow or painful/burning urination, or urinating often, especially at night
- Difficulty in having an erection
- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in urine or semen
- Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs

What are the Risk Factors for Developing Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer affects 1 in 6 men ⁽²⁾ and there are four main factors that may influence risk of development of prostate cancer in men: ⁽³⁾

Age – You are at risk if you are age 40 and over and African American with a family history; the risk is age 50 and over for all other men. The most common age group for diagnosis of this disease is over age 65 but it is becoming more common in men ages 55-65. ⁽³⁾	Diet – Eating foods low in fiber and high in fat and red meat may increase prostate cancer risk. ⁽³⁾ Keep fat intake from red meat and dairy products to a minimum, as well as your supplemental calcium intake to less than 1,500 mg per day. ⁽²⁾
Family History – Your risk of developing prostate cancer doubles if your father, brother or close male blood relative has had the disease. The risk is even higher if a blood family member was less than 55 years of age and had it or three or more blood family members have had it. ⁽³⁾	Weight – While obesity is not a direct link to the diagnosis of prostate cancer, when obese men are diagnosed with this disease, it is usually a very aggressive form of the disease. ⁽²⁾

Early Detection and Screening

While no one can tell you if you should be screened for cancer prior to symptoms appearing, some medical professionals feel that screenings are inappropriate for several reasons; potential for false positive results, you may receive treatment that may never impact your health, and you may experience side effects from the treatment. However, there are many other medical professionals who are advocates of regular screening as they believe discovering prostate cancer early offers more options for successful treatment. The two tests that doctors commonly perform to detect prostate cancer are: ⁽²⁾

- **Prostate Specific Antigen test (PSA)** – PSA is a substance made by the prostate and a PSA test measures the level of PSA in the blood. While a higher PSA can be found in men who have prostate cancer, a higher PSA may also be present in men who have an enlarged prostate, prostate infection and/or who have had other medical procedures. ⁽¹⁾
- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)** – A DRE is where a doctor or nurse checks the size and shape of the prostate for any abnormalities. ⁽¹⁾

Contact Your Doctor

In order to make an informed decision, have a conversation with your doctor. Your doctor can help you establish whether you are a candidate for prostate cancer screening, especially if there are major risk factors involved. By learning more about prostate cancer, you can understand the benefits and risks of screening tests and treatment. ⁽²⁾

*~ Seek yearly check-up ~ Control cholesterol ~
~ Eat low-fat/high-fiber foods ~ Monitor calcium intake ~
~ Maintain a healthy weight ~ Exercise regularly ~*

(1) www.cdc.gov (2) www.pcf.org (3) www.prostatehealthguide.com

This information is intended as informational only; not as a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.