



Battling Prostate Problems?

A fight you can win

Most men will be affected by prostate problems, at some point in their lives. Proper detection and treatment, however, can alleviate and even cure most prostate disorders.

Despite its walnut size and weight of just an ounce, the prostate plays a prominent role in a man's urinary and sexual health. The prostate produces fluid that is a component of semen. If the prostate is enlarged for any reason, it can press on the urethra and cause urinary problems.

Symptoms of prostate disease include pain, burning and difficulty in urinating; blood in the urine or semen; painful ejaculation; and lower back pain.

PROSTATE PROBLEMS

Experts believe diet, race, heredity and the aging process may all lead to prostate trouble. The three most common problems associated with the prostate are:

Prostatitis. This condition develops when the prostate swells or becomes inflamed, usually caused by bacterial infection.

Benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH. A normal prostate can also grow many times in size when hormonal changes occur after age 40, causing BPH.

Prostate cancer. Even though prostate cancer is one of the most diagnosed cancers in America, on average men have only a 3% risk of actually dying from the disease. Tumors are often slow-growing and highly treatable. However, men sometimes experience no symptoms until the cancer has spread. Thus, early detection by your doctor is important.

MANY TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatments for prostatitis and BPH include a low-fat diet and medications. Chemotherapy, surgery and radiation target prostate cancer. But sometimes, all that is needed is watchful waiting for slow-growing tumors for men over 70. Contact your doctor to see which treatment is right for you.

SCREENING GUIDELINES

It's important for you to get your prostate checked. The American Urological Association recommends you discuss the benefits and limitations of these tests with your doctor:

- A digital rectal exam (DRE) once a year after age 40, or earlier if you are having symptoms. Although some men consider this test embarrassing, it is a quick, simple procedure that could save your life.
- A PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test once a year for men over 50, or earlier for men in high risk groups, such as African-Americans or those with a family history of prostate problems.

If you have a positive DRE or PSA, your doctor may order a biopsy to determine if cancer is involved. Call your doctor today to schedule your screening!

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