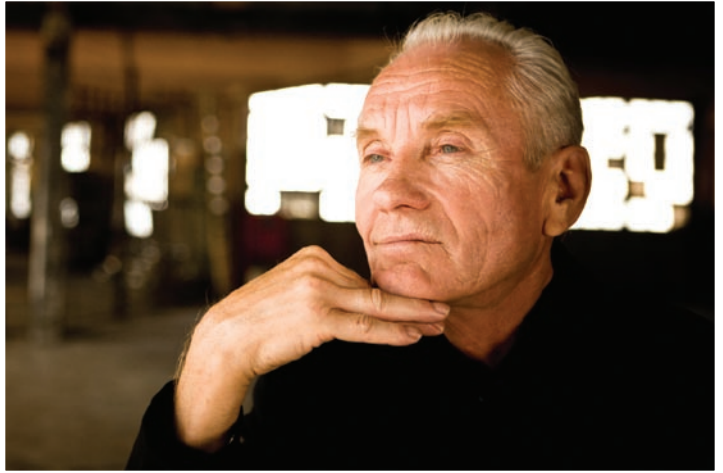




Prostate Cancer



Basic description

In American men, prostate cancer is the most common cancer (other than skin cancer) and the second leading cause of cancer death. The prostate gland is walnut-sized and is located in front of the rectum, behind the penis, and under the bladder. It contains cells that produce seminal fluid, which protects and nourishes sperm cells in semen. Most prostate cancers grow very slowly, but when they spread, they can do so quickly. Most early cases of prostate cancer cause no symptoms, but some early signs may be frequent urination, especially at night; blood in urine; difficulty starting urination or inability to urinate; and weak or painful urination. However, these symptoms may be signs of other conditions. Men who experience these symptoms should see a doctor.

Opportunities

Prevention Although the causes of prostate cancer are not yet completely understood, researchers have found several factors that increase the risk of developing the disease. Many risk factors, such as a man's age, race, and family history, are beyond his control, but since high-fat diets have been linked to prostate cancer, eating a diet that is low in saturated fat and red meats may help reduce a man's risk for developing the disease. A diet that is high in fruits and vegetables may also help prevent prostate cancer.

Detection At this time, there is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against routine prostate cancer screening for average-risk men. For this reason, the American Cancer Society does not recommend routine screening for prostate cancer. Rather, the American Cancer Society recommends that health care professionals discuss the potential benefits and limitations of prostate cancer early detection testing with average-risk men beginning at age 50, to decide if testing is right for them. Men at higher risk, including African American men and men with a first-degree relative with prostate cancer, should have this conversation with their doctor beginning at age 45. Men at even higher risk (because they have several close relatives diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age) should have this discussion with their doctor at age 40. If a man chooses to be tested, the two recommended tests are the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test and digital rectal exam (DRE).

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Treatment If prostate cancer is found early, treatment with curative intent is often initiated. Such treatment usually consists of either radical prostatectomy (surgical removal of the prostate gland) or radiation treatment (of which there are multiple forms). If the cancer is believed to be slow growing and is not causing symptoms, “watchful waiting” may be chosen initially, especially for older men. Active treatment will be started later if the cancer begins to grow more quickly or symptoms appear. For cancer that has spread beyond the prostate gland, treatments such as hormone therapy and/or chemotherapy may be recommended. Each of the surgical and nonsurgical treatments has side effects that should be considered when deciding how to proceed.

Statistics

The five-year relative survival rate represents the percentage of patients who live at least five years after diagnosis, whether disease-free, in remission, or under treatment (after excluding people who die of other causes from these calculations). It does not imply that five-year survivors have been permanently cured of cancer. Localized cancer is cancer that, at the time of diagnosis, had not spread to additional sites within the body. Typically, the earlier cancer is found and diagnosed, the more successful the treatment, thus enhancing the survival rate.

Prostate cancer is usually detected before it spreads. The five-year relative survival rate for early prostate cancer is very high with or without treatment (near 100%). If the cancer has spread by the time it is detected, it is less likely to be curable.

Who is at risk?

Gender Only men are at risk.

Age Although men of any age can get prostate cancer, the chance of having it increases rapidly after age 50. More than 70% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men older than 65.

Racial/Ethnic background African American men and Jamaican men of African descent have the highest documented prostate cancer incidence rates in the world. Furthermore, in the United States, the prostate cancer death rate for African American men is more than twice the rate for white men.

Other risk factors

Heredity Genetic studies suggest that 5% to 10% of prostate cancers may be inherited.

Diet A high-fat diet may play a part in causing prostate cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends a diet that is low in saturated fat (mainly found in animal sources, such as red meat and dairy products), as well as a diet high in fruits and vegetables.

Physical activity Engaging in regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight may help reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer in the United States 2009 estimates

- **New cases: 192,280**
- **Deaths per year: 27,360**
- **Five-year relative survival rate for localized stage: 100%**
- **Five-year relative survival rate for all stages combined: 99%**
- **Ten-year relative survival rate for all stages combined: 93%**

Quality-of-life issues

From the time of diagnosis, the quality of life for every cancer patient and survivor is affected in some way. The American Cancer Society has identified four quality-of-life factors that affect cancer patients and their families; these factors are social, psychological, physical, and spiritual.

The concerns that patients and survivors most often express are fear of recurrence; chronic and/or acute pain; sexual problems; fatigue; guilt for delaying screening or treatment, or for doing things that may have caused the cancer; changes in physical appearance; depression; sleep difficulties; changes in what they are able to do after treatment; and the burden on finances and loved ones. For prostate cancer patients and survivors, quality-of-life concerns most often revolve around the potential for incontinence and sexual dysfunction.

In recent years, the quality of life for those who are living with cancer has received increased attention. No one has to make the cancer journey alone. The American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network® is an online community for people with cancer and their families and friends. To participate, visit www.cancer.org/csn.

Emerging trends

Emerging trends in the area of prostate cancer include:

Basic research Little is known about how to prevent prostate cancer. Additionally, doctors are uncertain as to which prostate cancers will be fast growing and need aggressive treatment, or which will be slow growing and need less aggressive treatment. Therefore, research is focusing on better ways to prevent the disease and identify how it grows.

Genetics Genetic research is seeking to identify men at highest risk for prostate cancer, so screening may begin earlier. Research on genes may also make it possible to design medications and treatments to reverse the changes that lead to prostate cancer.

Prevention Research continues to look at foods, such as tomatoes and soybeans, that may reduce the risk of prostate cancer. New drugs that block the effects of male hormones, which may promote prostate cancer growth, are being developed. A large study is testing vitamin E and selenium supplements for prostate cancer prevention.

Vaccines Several types of vaccines for increasing the body's immunity to prostate cancer cells are being tested.

Additional resources

To learn more about prostate cancer and the American Cancer Society's resources and programs, please call 1-800-227-2345 (toll free) or visit our Web site at www.cancer.org.

Additional information on prostate cancer may be found at:

- **National Cancer Institute**
Cancer Information Service
Toll-free number: 1-800-4-CANCER
Web site: www.cancer.gov
- **Prostate Cancer Foundation**
Toll-free number: 1-800-757-CURE
Web site: www.prostatecancerfoundation.org
- **American Urological Association**
Toll-free number: 1-866-746-4282
Web site: www.auanet.org
- **National Prostate Cancer Coalition**
Toll-free number: 1-888-245-9455
Web site: www.fightprostatecancer.org

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Bottom line

Age and gender are the main risk factors for developing prostate cancer. Detecting prostate cancer in an earlier, more treatable form may increase the success of treatments and survival. All men 50 and older should talk to their doctors about the risks and benefits of prostate testing to decide if it's right for them. Men with an abnormal DRE or PSA should discuss all available treatment options with their doctor, especially since it is not clear whether all men need to be treated immediately for prostate cancer.



We **save lives** and create more birthdays by helping you stay well, helping you get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.

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