

# Prostate Cancer

Symptoms and Treatments





## We're here to empower you.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men after skin cancer, but it's also one of the easiest to treat when it's caught early. That's why working with your doctor to determine your risks and screening options is so important. This guide will give you some of the information and resources you need to help protect yourself.





## Here's what you need to know about prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is a type of urologic cancer, a group of cancers that affects the urinary system. Prostate cancer starts within cells of the prostate gland, which is only found in men. The prostate gland, which produces seminal fluid, sits just below the bladder and in front of the rectum.

Most prostate cancers do not show any symptoms until the cancer is more advanced. Normally, the prostate is about the size of a walnut and surrounds part of the urethra (the tube that empties urine from the bladder).

As men age, the prostate may get bigger and may cause problems with urine flow and sexual function. This condition is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is not a cancer, but surgery may be needed to correct it if you have significant urinary symptoms. That's why it's so important to monitor your risk factors and work with your doctor to get the right screening tests, if needed. This guide will review some common prostate cancers, as well as their symptoms and treatments.

## What causes prostate cancer?

While there is no known cause for prostate cancer, there are risk factors that can increase your chances of developing it. At the cellular level, prostate cancer happens because of changes to your body's genes that control the way cells in the prostate gland and its supporting systems work, especially how they grow and divide.

Genetic changes can be passed down from your family members, happen randomly, or happen because of an exposure to tobacco smoke or harmful chemicals as a part of your job.



## Am I at risk for prostate cancer?

A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury. It's important to talk about any of these prostate cancer risk factors with your doctor. Here are some factors that can increase your chances of developing prostate cancer.

### AGE

Age 40-45: You are at higher risk if a first-degree relative had prostate cancer before age 65. Age 50+: All men have an increased risk.

### RACE/ETHNICITY

African-Americans are more likely to get prostate cancer and twice as likely to die from it compared to Caucasian men.

### GENE CHANGES

Having inherited mutations of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, or Lynch syndrome.

### FAMILY HISTORY

Having a first-degree relative (father or brother) with a history of prostate cancer.

## What warning signs should I look out for?

Talking to your doctor about prostate cancer is a great place to start, as some of the symptoms of advanced prostate cancer can also be symptoms of benign conditions. These include:

- Problems urinating including frequency, urgency, nocturia, weak urine flow, or incomplete emptying of bladder or dribbling of urine
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Pain in the hips, back, chest, or other areas from cancer that has spread
- Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet, or loss of bladder/bowel control from cancer pressing on the spinal cord

## Participate in preventive screening.

Screening for prostate cancer is so important for men because if it's found and treated early, the chances of survival are very good. There are two primary ways to screen for prostate cancer:

### PSA

Although PSA is not a perfect test, it is currently the best way to first detect prostate cancer. A simple blood test looks for PSA, a substance made by the prostate gland. When there's a problem with the prostate, like prostate cancer, it starts to release more and more PSA. If PSA levels keep increasing over time, it might tell your doctor that you are at a higher prostate cancer risk, or that you need more testing for prostate cancer. Increased PSA levels are not always cancer; sometimes they are due to other prostate diseases. Also, low levels of PSA do not necessarily rule out the possibility of cancer.

### Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)

Your primary care doctor gives the DRE. It involves physically palpating the prostate gland to feel for abnormal texture, shape or size. If your doctor feels an abnormality, you might need further tests to see if it is cancer. By age 40, all men should start talking to their doctor about their prostate cancer risk. Your doctor will help you make decisions about when you should start regular prostate cancer screenings.



## Get the right treatment plan for you.

At AdventHealth Gordon, your individualized treatment plan will factor in the type of cancer, your age, whether the tumor has spread, and your overall health. If you are diagnosed with prostate cancer, your doctor will discuss treatment options specific to your cancer with you and your family. Consider your options carefully, and ask questions so you and your physician agree on the best course of treatment for you. Treatment options may include:

- Active surveillance for patients who have cancer confined to the prostate and defined as low in aggressiveness. Most often, this is an option for older men who have poor health.
- Surgery: A radical prostatectomy is the complete removal of the prostate. This is one of the most common treatments for prostate cancer. This procedure is performed as robotic-assisted laparoscopic surgery, which allows the surgeon to operate through small ports instead of large incisions. Utilizing this minimally invasive

technique and magnified vision system, the surgeon performs a precise dissection of the entire prostate and surrounding lymph nodes, as well as nerve sparing if indicated. This type of surgery results in less blood loss and quicker recovery time.

- Radiation therapy delivers radiation to the cancer to destroy cancer cells. Sometimes this is used as a last line of treatment or in combination with surgery for treating prostate cancer.
- Sometimes in specific settings, hormonal therapy is used as treatment to decrease the level of the male hormone testosterone to slow the growth of the tumor.

Beyond the medicine, you'll work with nutritional, spiritual and emotional support experts. They'll guide you to any lifestyle changes that can help contribute to successful cancer treatment, like quitting smoking and increasing exercise.





## How can our urologic cancer program care for you?

The urologic cancer program at AdventHealth Gordon is dedicated to providing the highest quality of care available for urologic cancer treatment.

Our exceptional medical and surgical teams work tirelessly to screen for, detect, diagnose and treat many urological cancers, including prostate cancer.

The urologic cancer program's medical team includes highly skilled urologic oncologists, hematologists, medical oncologists and radiation oncologists. It also provides highly trained nurses and support services that include genetic counseling, spiritual counseling, support groups,

specialized rehabilitation programs and a urologic cancer patient navigator — all with the goal to heal you in body, mind and spirit.

### Let's talk in person.

**For more information about AdventHealth Gordon's prostate cancer care, call 706-307-6031.**

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