

Prostate Cancer

Most cases of prostate cancer begin in the gland cells of the prostate. Known as the silent killer because men often do not have symptoms, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer among men in the United States and a leading cause of cancer deaths among men. However, early detection is critical to survival and if prostate cancer is detected early and before the cancer spreads, patients have a nearly 100 percent chance of survival after five years. With early diagnosis and treatment improvements over the past 25 years, survival rates have increased dramatically for all stages of prostate cancer.

Statistics

- One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime.
- One in 36 men will die from the disease, making it the second most common cause of cancer death among men.
- In 2010, 217,730 new cases of prostate cancer were diagnosed in the United States.
- In Texas, it is estimated that 16,093 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in 2011, and 1,798 men will die from the disease.

Risk Factors

- **Age:** Men age 65 and older account for about 64 percent of all prostate cancer cases.
- **Family History:** Men with close relatives (father or brother) who have had prostate cancer are twice as likely to develop the disease.
- **Race:** African Americans have the highest rate of prostate cancer in the United States and are more likely to die from the disease than any other racial group.
- **Genetic Factors:** A gene mutation on BRCA-2 denotes an increased risk of developing an aggressive prostate cancer at a younger age.
- **Diet:** Men who consume high amounts of red meat or dairy products have a higher risk of prostate cancer.

Symptoms

The following may be symptoms of prostate cancer but could be linked to other health conditions. If these symptoms are present, men are encouraged to consult their physician for proper testing:

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| • Frequent urination, especially at night | • Frequent pain or stiffness in spine, hips, ribs, and other bones | • Blood in urine or semen |
| • Difficulty controlling urination or bowel movements | • Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet | • Difficulty having an erection |
| • Painful or burning urination | | • Painful ejaculation |
| | | • Loss of appetite and weight |

Prevention

- Nutrition
 - Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Tomatoes, pink grapefruit, and watermelon are rich in substances that may help prevent prostate cancer.
 - Reduce consumption of red meat and dairy products.
 - Consumption of soy products may control testosterone levels, which are linked to prostate cancer.
- Lifestyle
 - Regular exercise may decrease the risk of prostate cancer.
 - Since obesity can further complicate prostate cancer, maintain a healthy body weight.

Screening

It is essential that men discuss with their physicians the risks and benefits associated with prostate cancer screening to make an informed decision about testing. In most cases, men should schedule yearly prostate screenings beginning at age 50. Men at high risk (African-American men and men with a family history of prostate cancer before age 65) should begin testing at age 45. Prostate screenings can include the PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test and DRE (digital rectal exam).

Treatment Options

Prostate cancer, depending on the stage, may be treated by different members of the cancer care team – urologists, medical oncologists, and radiation oncologists. Consultation with each of these specialists is encouraged where appropriate. Treatment options vary depending on how advanced the cancer is and if it has spread to other parts of the body. Physicians will determine the most appropriate treatment for each patient, but possible treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, and chemotherapy.

Sources: American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Cancer Institute, and Texas Cancer Registry