

Know the Basic Facts About Prostate Cancer

Who can get prostate cancer?

- The prostate, which produces semen, is found only in men. Women cannot get prostate cancer.
- Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in the United States. 1 in 6 American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- Men with a first-degree relative – a father, brother, or son – with prostate cancer are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer.
- African-American men are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer than Caucasian men.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

- If the cancer is caught at its earliest stages, most men will not experience any symptoms.
- Symptoms that might indicate the presence of prostate cancer include: a need to urinate frequently, especially at night; difficult, painful, burning or bloody urination; painful ejaculation; and/or frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs.

What does it mean to be screened for prostate cancer?

- Screening for cancer entails testing for cancer in someone who has no signs or symptoms of the disease but who may be at risk for developing the disease. Screening tests cannot diagnose cancer, but abnormal results indicate a need for further tests.
- Screening for prostate cancer can be done in a doctor's office using two different tests:
 - PSA (prostate-specific antigen) is a protein secreted by the prostate that is typically elevated in men with prostate cancer. A blood test measures the level of PSA in the blood.
 - During a DRE (digital rectal exam), the physician inserts a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum and examines the prostate for irregularities in size, shape and texture.
- If the PSA and/or the DRE show abnormal results and prostate cancer is suspected, a biopsy will be performed. During the biopsy, cells from the prostate will be removed and examined to determine whether cancer is present.

Points to Remember Before Starting the Conversation

- Most men find it awkward to talk about personal health matters with family members, especially with their daughters.
- There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to whether a man should be screened for prostate cancer. The goal is for every man to discuss his personal risk factors with his doctors to determine the best strategy for early detection.
- A diagnosis of prostate cancer is the beginning of a journey, not the end. When caught and treated early, prostate cancer has a cure rate of over 90 percent.

Questions to Ask the Men in Your Life About Prostate Cancer

- Have you considered talking with your doctor about prostate cancer?
- Do you know the basic facts about prostate cancer – who can get it, what the symptoms are, what it means to be screened?
- Do you know the risk factors for prostate cancer?
- Do you know if anyone in your immediate family – father, brother, grandfather – has been diagnosed with prostate cancer?
- Would you be interested in learning more about prostate cancer?
- Can we sit down together to learn more about prostate cancer?