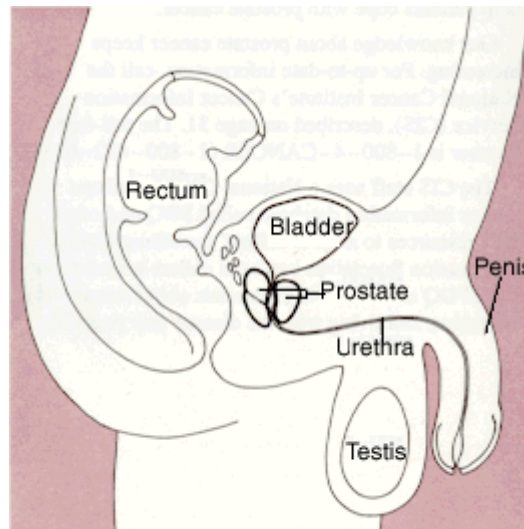


## September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

### What is the Prostate?

The prostate is a gland in the male reproductive system. It makes and stores seminal fluid, a milky fluid that nourishes sperm. This fluid is released to form part of semen. The prostate is about the size of a walnut. It is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It surrounds the upper part of the urethra, the tube that empties urine from the bladder. If the prostate grows too large, the flow of urine can be slowed or stopped.

To work properly, the prostate needs male hormones (androgens). Male hormones are responsible for male sex characteristics. The main male hormone is testosterone, which is made mainly by the testicles. Some male hormones are produced in small amounts by the adrenal glands.



This picture shows the prostate and nearby organs.

### What are the Key Statistics About Prostate Cancer?

Not including skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men and is the second leading cause of cancer death in men in the United States. In 2025, it is estimated that 313,780 new cases will be diagnosed and 35,770 men will die from the disease. African-American men are more likely to have prostate cancer and to die from it than other men.

## Who's at Risk?

The following risk factors are associated with prostate cancer:

- **Age.** Prostate cancer is rare in men younger than 40. The chance of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50. About 6 in 10 cases of prostate cancer are found in men older than 65.
- **Genetics.** A man's risk for developing prostate cancer is higher if his father or brother has had the disease. Inherited conditions associated with an increased risk also include Lynch syndrome and BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations.
- **Race/Ethnicity.** Prostate cancer is more common in African American men and in Caribbean men of African ancestry than in men of other races. It occurs less often in Asian American and Hispanic/Latino men than in non-Hispanic whites.
- **Diet and dietary factors.** The exact role of diet in prostate cancer is not clear. Some evidence suggests that a diet high in animal fat and dairy products may increase the risk of prostate cancer and a diet high in fruits and vegetables may decrease the risk.
- **Smoking.** Smoking may increase the risk of dying from prostate cancer.

Scientists have studied whether a vasectomy, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), obesity, lack of exercise, smoking, radiation exposure, or a sexually transmitted virus might increase the risk for prostate cancer. At this time, there is little evidence that these factors contribute to an increased risk of developing the disease.

## What are Signs and Symptoms of Prostate Cancer?

Early prostate cancer often does not cause symptoms, but more advanced prostate cancer can cause any of the following:

- A need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine
- Weak or interrupted flow of urine
- Painful or burning urination
- Blood in urine or semen
- Difficulty in having an erection
- Painful ejaculation
- Pain in hip, spine, ribs or other areas from cancer that has spread to the bones
- Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet, or even loss of bladder or bowel control from cancer pressing on the spinal cord

Any of these symptoms may be caused by cancer or by other less serious health problems, such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or an infection. A man who has symptoms like these should see his healthcare provider or a urologist (a doctor who specializes in treating diseases of the genitourinary system).

## Can Prostate Cancer be Found Early?

Men should be educated about screening options so that they can make a personal choice. The Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test is used mainly to screen for prostate cancer in men without symptoms. It's also one of the first tests done in men who have symptoms that might be caused by prostate cancer. This test measures the levels of PSA in a blood sample. The level of PSA may rise in men who have prostate cancer, BPH, or infection in the prostate. The American Cancer Society recommends men speak with their healthcare provider about the benefits and limits of PSA testing beginning at:

- Age 50: Men at an average risk for prostate cancer and have a life expectancy of at least 10 years
- Age 45: Black men and those with close family history of prostate cancer before the age of 65

- Age 40: Men at higher risk due to BRCA mutation carriers or close relatives diagnosed at an early age

## **Can Prostate Cancer be Prevented?**

There's no sure way to prevent prostate cancer. Study results often conflict with each other, and most studies aren't designed to definitively prove whether something prevents prostate cancer. As a result, no clear ways to prevent prostate cancer have emerged. In general, doctors recommend that men with an average risk of prostate cancer make choices that benefit their overall health if they're interested in prostate cancer prevention.

From the NCI:

There are a few protective factors that may decrease the risk of prostate cancer. These include:

- Folate. A type of vitamin B that is found in some foods such as green vegetables, beans and orange juice. Folic acid, a man-made form of folate, is found in vitamin supplements and fortified foods, such as whole-grain breads and cereals. A 10-year study showed that the risk of prostate cancer was lower in men who had enough folate in their diets. However, the risk of prostate cancer was increased in men who took 1 milligram (mg) supplements of folic acid.
- Finasteride and Dutasteride. These are drugs used to lower the amount of male sex hormones made by the body. Prevention studies found both to lower the risk of prostate cancer.

New ways to prevent prostate cancer are being studied in clinical trials.

## **Cancer Prevention Trials at Rutgers Cancer Institute**

If you would like information about clinical trials for preventing cancer, please call Rutgers Cancer Institute's Office of Human Research Services at 732-235-7356. For additional information about nationwide cancer prevention trials, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4 CANCER or visit their website at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

## **Where can I Find Further Information?**

The Resource and Learning Center

732-235-9639

[www.cinj.org/rlc](http://www.cinj.org/rlc)

Provides reliable, relevant and current information about all aspects of cancer.

The American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

Prostate Cancer Foundation

1-800-757-CURE

[www.pcf.org](http://www.pcf.org)

Us TOO International

1-800-808-7866

[www.ustoo.org](http://www.ustoo.org)



RLC prostate cancer website QR code. Scan with smartphone / device.