

Fast Facts on Prostate Cancer



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Overview

No one knows the exact cause of prostate cancer. Doctors can seldom explain why one man develops the disease and another does not. Research has shown that men with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop prostate cancer. A risk factor is something that may increase the chance of developing a disease.

Age: This is the strongest risk factor for prostate cancer. The disease is rare in men younger than 45, but the chance of getting it goes up sharply as a man ages.

Family history: A man's risk of prostate cancer is higher than average if his brother or father had the disease.

Race: Prostate cancer is more common in African American men. It is less common in Asian and American Indian men.

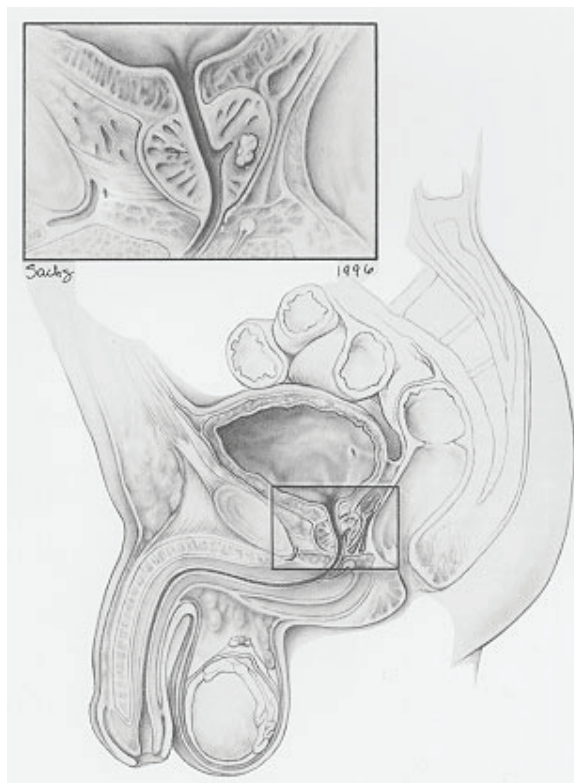
Statistics

- Every year over 232,090 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and about 30,350 die. If detected early, prostate cancer is often treatable.
- 1 in 6 men is at a lifetime risk of prostate cancer
- A man with one close relative with the disease has double the risk. With two close relatives, his risk is five-fold. With three, the chance is 97%.
- Two men every five minutes are diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- African American males have a prostate cancer incidence rate up to 60% higher than white males and double the mortality (death) rate of white males. Every 100 minutes an African American male dies from prostate cancer.
- Men with a body mass index over 32.5 have about a one-third greater risk of dying from prostate cancer than men who are not obese.
- Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in American males today
- Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States
- Prostate cancer is mainly found in men age 55 or over with an average age of 70 at the time of diagnosis
- Majority of deaths from prostate cancer are related to advanced disease with metastases

Knowing more about the prostate and prostate cancer is the first step in coming to terms with a diagnosis of prostate cancer. The following section describes the prostate, what happens in prostate cancer, the causes and risk factors, and signs and symptoms of prostate cancer.

The Prostate

- A small gland located at the bottom of the bladder, surrounding the topmost section of the urethra, the tube that drains urine from the bladder
- Produces prostatic fluid
- Connected to the seminal vesicles, which produce fluid that mixes with prostatic fluid to form semen, the substance in which sperm is transported
- Tubes from the testicles carry sperm to the prostate where the sperm are mixed with semen



Prostate Cancer

Cells make up all of your body's tissues and organs, including the prostate. Normally, cells within the prostate grow, divide, interact, and die to make sure the prostate functions properly. Cells within the prostate are held together tightly and when cells growing within the prostate bump into each other, they normally stop growing or die off to make room for new cells.

Prostate cancer cells have lost control and grow on top of each other, forming a tumor. Cancer cells can also break away from the prostate and travel throughout your body, attach to other tissues, and continue to grow, a process called metastasis. What causes normal prostate cancer cells to become cancer cells isn't fully understood, but it involves a disruption of the processes that control normal cell growth and death.



Causes and Risk Factors

The causes of prostate cancer are not fully understood, although it is believed that multiple factors can contribute to your overall risk, including your family background, ethnicity, diet, and environmental factors.

- Risk for developing prostate cancer is 2 times higher in men whose father or a brother has been diagnosed with the disease
- Risk begins to increase significantly at age 50 for white men and at age 40 for African-American men
- African-American men are more likely than whites to develop prostate cancer, whereas many Asian populations have the lowest rates of prostate cancer. [Click here for more information about the risks of prostate cancer in African-American men](#)
- Diets high in fat may increase your risk of prostate cancer by increasing testosterone, which stimulates prostate cell growth

Signs and Symptoms

Early-stage prostate cancer may not be associated with any obvious signs or symptoms, or may cause symptoms that can be mistaken for those of other disorders. Most cases of prostate cancer are not detected until they have spread out of the prostate and begin to cause noticeable symptoms.

The signs and symptoms of prostate cancer may include

- Pelvic pain
- Frequent need for urination
- Difficult or painful urination
- Blood in the urine
- Painful ejaculation
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Bone pain