

## The Prostate Prognosis

### *Don't Ignore an Uncomfortable Problem*



Most men probably don't like thinking about their prostates. But, it's worth doing once in a while. Problems with the small gland are common in men past the age of 50. The good news is that most prostate problems can be treated with good results.

The prostate is about the size of a walnut. It wraps around the urethra. The urethra is the tube that takes urine out of the bladder.



### **For men under 50**

For men *under 50*, the most common prostate problem is prostatitis. It can cause a burning feeling when you urinate or an urge to urinate more often. You might have a fever or just feel tired.

*Prostatitis* happens when the prostate becomes inflamed or irritated. Some kinds of prostatitis are caused by bacteria. If you have bacterial prostatitis, your doctor can spot it by looking at your urine through a microscope. Bacterial prostatitis can usually be treated with an antibiotic.

But most of the time, there's no clear cause for prostatitis. Scientists have yet to find an effective treatment when the cause is unknown. You may have to work with your doctor to find a treatment that works for you. Changing your diet or taking warm baths may help. No single solution works for everyone.

### **For men over 50**

For men *over 50*, the most common prostate problem is when the prostate gets bigger. This is often called prostate enlargement. The medical word for this is **benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)**. The prostate naturally grows larger as you get older. As it grows, it squeezes the urethra. The pressure of this squeezing can affect bladder control.

BPH can lead to more serious problems. These problems may include urinary tract infections. In rare cases, the constant urination problems can lead to kidney damage.

Several treatments are available for BPH. In recent years, scientists have found medicines that can shrink the prostate. This keeps it from blocking the bladder opening. Scientists have also developed devices that can help doctors. Now, doctors can take out parts of the prostate without major surgery. This can usually be done in a clinic or hospital without staying overnight. Sometimes, a person needs to have more serious surgery.

The symptoms of prostate cancer can be similar to those of BPH. Prostate cancer is when cancer cells form in the prostate. Most of the time, patients are diagnosed with prostate cancer after they get a special blood test, which is then followed by a prostate biopsy.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men after skin cancer. But most men with prostate cancer don't die from it. Many prostate cancers don't cause symptoms or become a serious health threat. This is because prostate cancer tends to grow more slowly than many other cancers. A prostate tumor may grow for 30 years before it gets large enough to cause symptoms. Several treatments are available. Ask your doctor about the option that is best for you.

Certain risk factors have been linked to prostate cancer, like eating a high-fat diet. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is funding scientists to look for ways to prevent prostate cancer. NIH also has many research programs aimed at finding treatments for BPH and other prostate problems.

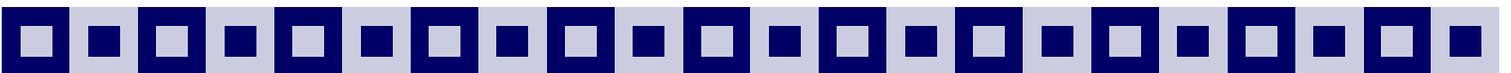
See your doctor right away if something doesn't seem right to you down there. And if you can't urinate at all, get medical help right away!

## When to See a Doctor

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have a frequent urge to urinate.
- Need to get up many times during the night to urinate.
- See blood in your urine or semen.
- Feel pain or burning when you pass urine or ejaculate.
- Have frequent pain or stiffness in your lower back, hips, pelvic or rectal area, or upper thighs.

This article was reprinted with permission by *NIH News in Health*  
A monthly newsletter from the National Institutes of Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
October 2010 Edition



For more information, call us at:

**1-855-959-7340**

or visit our website at

**[www.ICHPColorado.com](http://www.ICHPColorado.com)**

and check out

**In the Spotlight.....**

