

Hope & Healing

Prostate Gland Causes of an Enlarged Prostate

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction

The prostate gland is actually a cluster of small glands that surround the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder, through the penis to be eliminated). The gland produces fluid that makes up 95% of the semen. The fluid is thought to contain a substance that helps the sperm to live and to be more lively.

The main disorders that affect the prostate are growths and, rarely, infections. The growth can be cancerous, non-cancerous, or both. Because the prostate encircles the tube that eliminates urine, any kind of prostate disorder may hamper the free flow of urine and cause an uncomfortable as well as a dangerous problem.

The Enlarged Prostate

As men age, small gristly nodules develop in the prostate, causing it to enlarge. This enlargement can be harmless for a long time. As long as urine can flow freely there is no external change or pain outside since it is buried deep within the lower abdomen. Occasionally the passage of blood in the urine indicates something is wrong.

Then, the prostate becomes stiff and inflexible. This is where the trouble begins, as this stiffened gland pinches the outflow tube from the bladder. The bladder muscles can compensate and become more powerful and keep the urine flowing for a while. As the gland gets larger and stiffer, however, the bladder muscles come to the point where they can't overcome the blockage and the flow of urine is obstructed.

Symptoms

Symptoms of prostate enlargement vary widely. Most are connected to the need to urinate.

- Need to urinate frequently, especially at night.
- Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine.
- Inability to urinate.
- Weak or interrupted flow of urine.
- Painful or burning urination.
- Blood in the urine.
- Painful ejaculation.
- Continuing pain in the lower back, hips, and upper thighs.

The urge to urinate increases but the passageway is blocked.

The Risks of an Enlarged Prostate Gland

The growth of your prostate gland may begin at age 40 but seldom does it block the flow of urine before age 60 and then in about 10% of men. There are three main risks when the flow of urine is blocked.

- First, if your bladder is never completely emptied, pools of stagnant urine within it can become infected.
- Second, when the outflow of urine is blocked, pressure within the bladder increases and backs up into the kidneys, causing a serious infection of the kidneys.
- Third, if the urine blockage isn't

relieved, the bladder enlarges, causing its muscles to stretch. Urine is blocked into the kidneys which may shut down.

Determining the Cause of an Enlarged Prostate

If you are a man and have trouble urinating, your doctor's help will be required to pinpoint the cause. The tests and examinations used by the doctor will be done in an orderly progression if you are passing urine, even a small amount. If you can't pass urine at all see your doctor or go to an emergency facility immediately.

To find the cause of trouble your doctor will usually:

- Perform the basic exam using a gloved finger inserted into the rectum to search for an enlarged prostate.
- Evaluate a urine specimen for infection.
- Order an imaging study of the kidneys.
- Order a PSA test (Prostate Specific Antigen).
- Refer you to a Urologist.
- The Urologist will repeat the basic exam and may: order an ultrasound picture of the prostate or perform a biopsy of the prostate (removal of prostate tissue through the use of a hollow needle). This tissue is sent to test for cancer cells.

Cancer of the Prostate _____

Cancer of the prostate becomes more common the older men get. It is a slow growing cancer for the most part and tends to lie dormant for years without causing symptoms or health problems.

Sometimes the cancer will be found on an examination which was done because of symptoms that suggested a non-cancerous enlargement and sometimes cancer is found during surgery for relieving urinary blockage.

Just because cancer of the prostate is a slow growing cancer doesn't mean that you can be careless about check-ups. There is a risk that an undiscovered prostate cancer will spread to bones and cause a lot of pain and trouble. The symptoms of cancer of the prostate are the same as for non-cancerous prostate enlargement.

Note: Recent medical reports suggest that since men age 50 and older are at increased risk of developing cancer of the prostate, they should have a yearly exam after age forty and a PSA blood test when their doctor recommends.

If Cancer Isn't Found _____

If your symptoms are mild and diagnostic tests show that urgent treatment is not required, the urologist may choose to wait. One of three mild cases of enlarged prostate will clear up without treatment. Otherwise, the treatment is surgical: the removal of the prostate entirely or the portion that is blocking the passageway. Most surgeries on the prostate are successful.

There are a number of drugs that show promise of reducing the size of the prostate gland. At this time there are several drugs being prescribed and further research is advancing on the others before they can be widely used.

If Cancer is Found _____

Treatment of prostate cancer is individualized to the age, general health and extent of the cancer. Prostate cancer can often be cured when it is found in an early state. And even when the cancer is widespread, it responds well to treatment.

Surgery, radiation therapy, and hormone therapy are used to treat cancer of the prostate, either singly or in combination.

- **Surgery.** The urologist may recommend either a TURP (trans urethral resection of the prostate), where an instrument, inserted in the penis, removes the excess tissue. Or the recommended surgery will be the total removal of the gland through an abdominal incision or an incision in the perineum (the space between the anus and the scrotum).
- **Radiation Therapy.** This is done through external radiation delivered by a cobalt machine over several weeks or through the insertion of radioactive beads implanted in the prostate through needles.
- **Hormone Therapy.** Male sex hormones stimulate cancer of the prostate. Therefore you can block the stimulation either through the use of female hormones or by removing the testicles, the source of the male hormones.
- **Do nothing.** Since prostate cancer is usually very slow growing, sometimes no treatment is given.

Summary _____

There are many men living today who have controlled or cured cancer of the prostate gland. The outlook is very good when it is found early. In fact, the chances of controlling advanced disease are good and getting better as researchers continue to find new ways to solve this problem.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Quarantine

Any problem you have can be quarantined so that it doesn't poison everything you do. The key to quarantining is in how you think about the problem before you.

Most problems arise from money, the use of time, emotional upsets, our relationships to others, and our health.

One way to quarantine is to use a thinking pad, a legal pad will do. Write down "What is the problem?" Then write down, "What am I going to do?" A good time to do this is just before going to sleep. Write it down. Then, sleep on it.

During the day, put the problem in quarantine. Break the habit of constantly thinking about the problem.

Soon, options will begin developing in your thoughts.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.