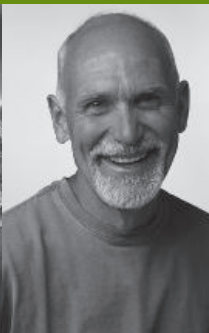
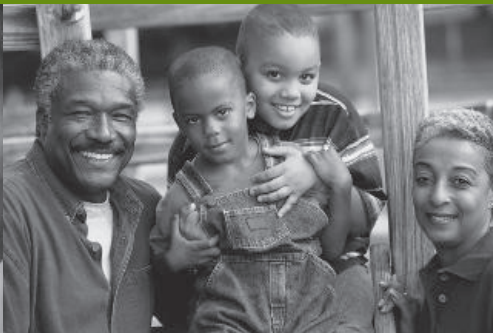




# prostate cancer



a guide for men and their families

**Talking about** their health is uncomfortable for many men, but it's important to do as much as you can to stay healthy. This means not using tobacco products, getting daily exercise, and going to your doctor for a regular check-up. One of the risks that many men face is prostate cancer. This booklet will help you understand more about prostate cancer, if you are at higher risk, and if you should be screened.

**The earlier prostate cancer is detected, the more treatment options you will have, and the better your chances for a good outcome.**

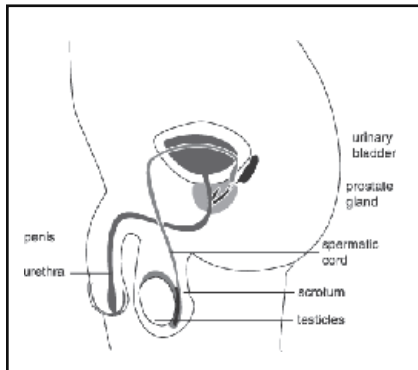
**You have special talents. Be around to pass them on.**

## Frequently asked questions

What is the prostate? .....	p. 2
What is prostate cancer? .....	p. 3
What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?.....	p. 4
Is prostate cancer serious? .....	p. 6
Am I at risk for prostate cancer? .....	p. 7
Should I be screened for prostate cancer?.....	p. 8
What is “screening”? .....	p. 9
What if my doctor tells me that I need further testing?.....	p. 11
What if I find out that I have prostate cancer?.....	p. 12
What are the treatment options for prostate cancer?.....	p. 13
What are the possible side effects of these treatments?..	p. 15
Where can I go for a free screening? .....	p. 16
Where can I find more information about prostate cancer? .....	p. 17

## What is the prostate?

**The prostate** is a walnut sized gland that encircles a man's urethra – the tube that runs from the bladder through the penis to allow urination. As you can see in the picture, the prostate is located in front of the rectum and below the bladder. The prostate makes a fluid that joins with semen to carry sperm during ejaculation. As men age, many develop a larger prostate.



## What is prostate cancer?

**Prostate cancer** begins when the prostate starts to make many abnormal cells. These abnormal cells may form a mass of tissue called a tumor, making part of the prostate larger. If allowed to grow over time without medical care, these cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body, causing serious illness and sometimes death.

## What are the signs or symptoms of prostate cancer?

**Many men** do not have any symptoms of prostate cancer. However, if you have any of the following symptoms it is important to call a doctor. Symptoms can include:

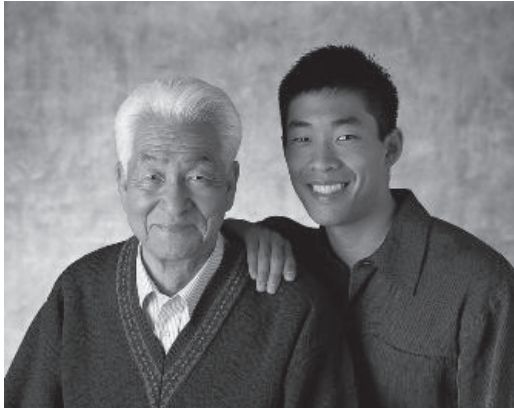
- Pain during sex, or suddenly not being able to have sex
- Pain or burning feeling during urination
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Weak flow of urine
- Difficulty starting or stopping urination
- Inability to urinate
- Constant pain in the lower back, pelvis, or upper thighs

**These symptoms can also be caused by other problems common to older men that are not cancer. It is always important to talk to a doctor if you experience any of these symptoms.**



## Is prostate cancer serious?

**There are different** forms of prostate cancer. One form of prostate cancer is slow growing and may never become a threat to your life. Another form of prostate cancer grows quickly and spreads beyond the prostate to other parts of the body causing serious illness and even death.



## Am I at risk for prostate cancer?

**All men** are at risk for prostate cancer as they age. The older you are, the higher your risk of developing prostate cancer. At age 45, only 1 in 2,500 men is diagnosed with prostate cancer. At age 75, about 1 in 9 men is diagnosed with prostate cancer.

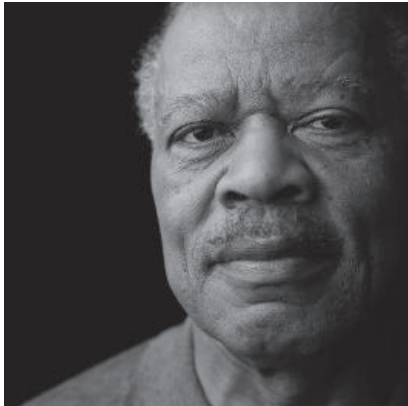
Some men are at higher risk for prostate cancer. These include:

- **Men with a family history of prostate cancer:** Those men with a father, grandfather, brother, uncle, or son who **has been diagnosed** with prostate cancer.
- **African-American men:** Prostate cancer is twice as common in African-American men as in white men. It is less common in Latino, Asian, and Native American men than in white men.

## Should I be screened for prostate cancer?

**You should** talk to a doctor about prostate screening if:

- You are any man age 50 or older
- You are an African-American man and age 40 or older
- You have a family history of prostate cancer and are age 40 or older



## What is “screening”?

**Screening for** prostate cancer means looking for signs of disease. Screening helps doctors detect prostate cancer at early stages when treatment is more effective. Recent studies show early detection has been an important factor in reducing prostate cancer deaths by 25%. **Men who have screening are more likely to have their prostate cancer detected early.**

There are two common ways that doctors screen for prostate cancer. One is called the **Digital Rectal Examination (DRE)** and the other the **Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)** test. Most often both tests are done together.

- **DRE or digital rectal examination** is a simple physical examination of the prostate gland. The doctor inserts a gloved finger into the rectum to feel the prostate. During the exam,

the doctor will be able to feel for the size of the prostate and find any irregular or abnormal areas.

- **PSA or prostate specific antigen** is a substance produced by the cells of the prostate. The level of PSA can be measured by a blood test. A high PSA level may indicate prostate disease, including prostate cancer. The PSA test can detect prostate cancer an average of 5.5 years before a doctor will be able to feel cancer on the prostate.



## What if my doctor tells me that I need further testing?

**Do not panic. This may not mean that you have cancer.** After discussing the results of the DRE and PSA, your doctor may recommend that you see a urologist. A urologist is a doctor who specializes in problems with the urinary tract and prostate. The urologist may want to do additional testing. Some of the additional tests may include a **transrectal ultrasound** or a **biopsy**.

- **A transrectal ultrasound** is when the doctor inserts a small probe into the rectum to create a picture of the prostate.
- **A biopsy** is when the doctor uses a small needle to take a sample of prostate cells. The sample will be looked at under a microscope to find out if there are any cancer cells.

**Many men who have additional testing do not have cancer.**

## What if I find out that I have prostate cancer?

**If your doctor** tells you that you have prostate cancer, you will want to talk about your treatment options. During this talk, you and your doctor will consider your age, whether or not the cancer has spread, and your overall health.

You should be active in discussions with your physician when it comes to treatment decisions.

It is also very important to talk to your family and/or partner about your disease. Your significant others will be affected by your illness, and they can be a strong source of comfort and support.

## What are the treatment options for prostate cancer?

**There are several** different types of treatment. They are most helpful when prostate cancer is found early and has not spread beyond the prostate gland. The following list briefly describes each type of treatment.

- **Watchful Waiting:** Your doctor will monitor your prostate cancer regularly using the PSA and DRE.
- **Surgery** (also called radical prostatectomy): The removal of the prostate.
- **External Radiation Therapy:** Radiation is directed at and around the prostate gland from outside of the body to destroy the cancer cells.
- **Internal Radiation Therapy** (also called brachytherapy): Radioactive “seeds” are surgically placed inside or near the prostate gland to destroy the cancer cells.

- **Hormone Therapy:** Prostate cells normally require male hormones to grow. Drugs that block male hormones may be prescribed to help stop prostate cancer cells from growing.
- **Cryotherapy:** A number of probes are placed inside or near the prostate to freeze and destroy the cancer cells.

## What are the possible side effects of these treatments?

**Each treatment** may have side effects. These can include pain, bleeding, diarrhea, inability to control urine, and the inability to achieve an erection. Some men only feel these side effects for a short time. For others, the side effects may be permanent. You will want to talk to your doctor, family, and/or partner about the positive and negative effects of each treatment before your treatment is chosen.

## Where can I go for a free screening?

**Men who** are eligible for a free screening include:

1) all men who are uninsured or underinsured, residents of Massachusetts, and are 50 years old or older,

**or**

2) all men who are uninsured or underinsured, residents of Massachusetts, and 40 years or older with a family history of prostate cancer

**or**

3) all African-American men who are uninsured or underinsured, residents of Massachusetts, and are 40 years or older.

All eligible men may receive a free prostate cancer screening through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Men's Health Partnership. Please call **617-624-5070** or **TTY: 617-624-5992** to locate the Men's Health Partnership cancer screening site nearest you.

## Where can I find more information about prostate cancer?

- **Your doctor** or primary health care provider
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Men's Health Partnership: **617-624-5070**;  
**TTY: 617-624-5992**
- The American Cancer Society: **1-800-227-2345** or  
**www.cancer.org**
- The National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Services: **1-800-422-6237** or **www.nci.nih.gov**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Men's Health Partnership  
617-624-5070



**GETTING HEALTHY.  
STAYING HEALTHY.  
TOGETHER.**

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Contact the health center closest to you to schedule  
a free prostate screening appointment:

Berkshire Health System, Pittsfield  
**413-445-9414**

Brockton Hospital, Brockton  
**508-941-7391**

Caring Health Center, Springfield (formerly Springfield  
Southwest Community Health Center)  
**413-739-1100 x1039**

Caritas Carney Hospital, Dorchester  
**1-800-488-5959**

Central Branch YMCA, Worcester  
**508-755-6101 x252 or x286**

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Lawrence  
**978-683-7747 x347**

(continued)

Franklin County Homecare, Turner's Falls

**413-773-5555 x257**

Latin American Health Institute (LHI), Boston

**617-350-6900**

North Adams Regional Hospital, North Adams  
Reach Community Health Foundation

**413-664-5173**

Spanish American Union, Springfield

**413-734-7381 x114**

Visiting Nurse's Association of Cape Cod, East Dennis

**1-888-557-9994**

Whittier Street Health Center, Roxbury

**617-989-3249**