



Prostate Cancer Quick Facts Guide

What is prostate cancer?

The prostate is a small gland about the size of a walnut that exists only in males and is part of the reproductive system. It sits beneath the bladder and surrounds the urethra, the channel that carries urine from the bladder through the penis. In addition to helping with urination, the prostate produces a fluid that nourishes and protects sperm as part of semen.

Prostate cancer develops when cells within the prostate begin to multiply abnormally and continue growing without normal control. Over time, these excess cells can form a mass known as a tumor.

In medical terms, prostate cancer is characterized by the uncontrolled growth of abnormal prostate cells. Prostate cancer is among the most frequently diagnosed cancers in men. In many cases, it progresses slowly and may remain confined to the prostate for years. However, if the disease spreads beyond the gland to other parts of the body, it can become a serious and potentially life-threatening condition.

Who can develop prostate cancer?

Any person who has a prostate gland can develop prostate cancer. However, certain factors can increase the likelihood of being diagnosed with the disease, including:

-  **Advancing age:** The risk rises significantly with age, and most prostate cancer cases are diagnosed in men aged 65 and older.
-  **African American/Black ancestry:** Black men are more likely to develop prostate cancer and may experience more aggressive forms of the disease compared with other groups.
-  **Family history:** Having a close relative, such as a father, brother, or son, who has had prostate cancer can increase your risk.
-  **Inherited genetic mutations:** Certain inherited gene changes can make some individuals more susceptible to developing prostate cancer.
-  **Military service exposure:** Veterans who were exposed to harmful chemicals or environmental toxins during military service may face a greater risk of prostate cancer.

How can prostate cancer be found early?

Healthcare professionals often use a non-invasive PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) blood test to help screen for prostate cancer. The test measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland, in the bloodstream. Elevated PSA levels may indicate prostate cancer, although they can also be caused by other prostate conditions. As a result, a higher-than-normal PSA result may prompt additional testing or evaluation.

When should men get tested?

All men should start testing by age 40.

Men who have an increased risk including men of African American/Black ancestry, men with a family history and military veterans who were exposed to harmful chemicals should start testing by age 35.

-  **NO SIGN!** There are not usually any signs in the early stages of prostate cancer. Therefore, screening early is vital. If you or someone you know is experiencing signs that concern you, please, talk to your physician.

