



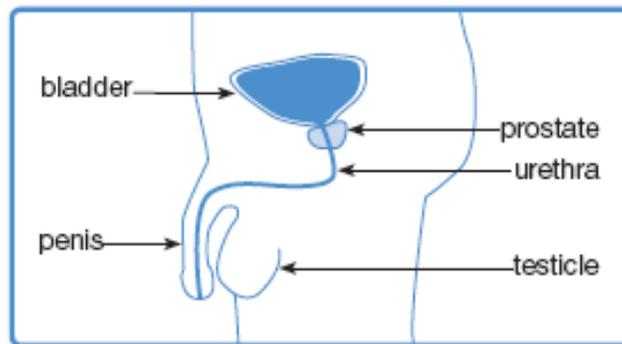
## MEN: KNOW YOUR PROSTATE!



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### What is the prostate gland?

Only men have a prostate gland. The prostate is usually the shape and size of a walnut. It lies underneath the bladder and surrounds the tube that men pass urine and semen through (urethra). The prostate gland's main job is to make some of the fluid that carries sperm, called semen.



### What can go wrong?

The three main types of prostate problem are:

- An enlarged prostate also called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or enlargement (BPE) – this is the most common prostate problem
- An inflammation or infection in the prostate called prostatitis
- Prostate cancer

## What changes should I look out for?

If you have problems passing urine it could be a sign of a prostate problem.

*Symptoms caused by prostate problems include:*

- Needing to urinate more often, especially at night – for example if you often need to go again after two hours
- Difficulty starting to pass urine
- Straining or taking a long time to finish urinating
- A weak flow of urine
- A feeling that your bladder has not emptied properly
- Needing to rush to the toilet – you may occasionally leak urine before you get there
- Dribbling urine

*Less common symptoms include:*

- Pain when passing urine
- Pain when ejaculating
- Problems getting or keeping an erection – this is not a common symptom of a prostate problem and is more often caused by other health conditions
- Blood in the urine or semen

If you have any of these symptoms, you should visit your Urologist to find out what is causing the problem.

## What is Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)?

BPH is a very common condition that affects many men from the age of about 50. Two out of every five men (41 per cent of men) over the age of 50 and three out of four men (75 per cent of men) in their 70s have problems passing urine that may be caused by BPH.

Your prostate gland slowly gets bigger as you get older. In some cases the prostate gland may press on the tube you pass urine through (urethra). If this happens you may find it difficult to pass urine. You may have a weaker stream and find it harder to empty your bladder. However, these urinary symptoms can also be caused by other medical problems such as a urine infection or other prostate problems described. If you have any of the symptoms described in this booklet you should visit your Urologist to find out what is causing the problem.

### **BPH is not a form of cancer and having BPH does not increase your risk of developing cancer**

Treatment depends on how bad the symptoms are and how much they affect your day to day activities and quality of life. If your symptoms are mild, you may not need treatment. Your doctor will keep an eye on your symptoms and talk to you about some simple changes to your lifestyle that may relieve your symptoms. For example, your doctor may ask you about the fluids you drink and advise you to cut down on alcohol and drinks that contain caffeine, such as tea and coffee. These can make urinary symptoms worse.

If your symptoms get worse or are causing you problems, ask your Urologist about treatment options. Several treatments are available ranging from medicines to surgery

## What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

Some men with prostate cancer may have no symptoms at all. However some men may have some of the symptoms as described above.

Other possible symptoms include:

- New pain in the lower back, hips or pelvis
- Problems getting or keeping an erection
- Blood in the urine or semen – but this is rare.

You do not need to have all of these symptoms to have a problem. These symptoms can also be caused by other problems such as BPH, so it is important to see your Urologist to find out what is causing your symptoms.

## What will happen at the doctor's?

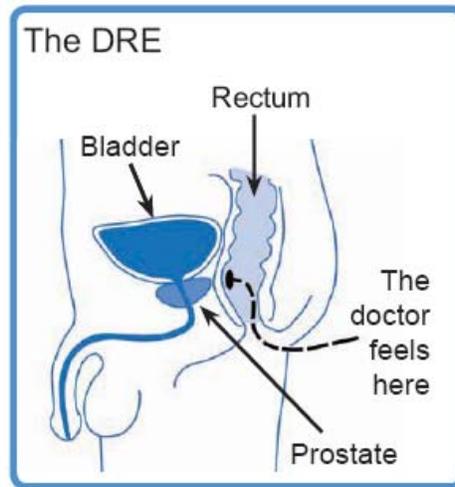
### PSA and other blood tests

The prostate gland makes a protein called PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen). It is normal to have some PSA in the blood. The PSA level rises as you get older, so a man aged 70 will have a higher PSA than a man aged 50. Your Urologist can measure the amount of PSA in your blood by taking a sample of your blood and sending it off to a laboratory to be tested. If there is a problem in the prostate, caused by BPH, prostatitis or prostate cancer, the levels of PSA in the blood can go up.

You may also have a blood test to check that your kidneys are working properly. This is because some undiagnosed prostate problems can affect your kidneys.

### Digital Rectal Examination (DRE)

A DRE is a simple test which can be done at the GP surgery. The DRE is usually done after the PSA test because it can affect your PSA level. You will be asked to lie on your left side on an examination table with your knees brought up to your chest. If you find it easier, you can stand and lean forward over the back of a chair or across the examination table instead.



The doctor feels your prostate through your back passage (rectum) with a gloved, lubricated finger. They are looking for any swelling or hard areas on the back surface of your prostate. The DRE should not be painful. Some men find it uncomfortable or embarrassing but it is over quickly.

### Urine flow test

This test involves passing urine into a machine that measures the speed of your urineflow. If you are passing urine slowly, it may mean that your prostate is pressing on the urethra.

### Ultrasound scan

An ultrasound scan can show whether your bladder is emptying properly. You may have the scan after the urineflow test, described above, when you have finished passing urine. The scan will show any urine that is left in the bladder.

## Treatment Options

- Life style modification especially fluid intake and reduction of alcohol and caffeine containing beverages.
- Medications – Alpha blockers
  - 5 Alpha reductase inhibitors
- Minimally invasive surgery
  - TURP: Trans Urethral Resection of Prostate – Gold Standard
  - TUIP: Trans Urethral Incision of Prostate

- Open Prostatectomy rarely done for a large gland, in this current era

## Talking to your Urologist

We all know that talking to your doctor about your nether regions can be a bit embarrassing, but it's a lot better than the alternative. All three prostate diseases are much easier to treat (and generally more successfully) if caught early.

If you have any questions, please contact

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