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What is
Prostate Cancer



What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is a type of cancer that develops in the prostate, a small walnut-shaped gland in men that produces seminal fluid. It is one of the most common types of cancer in men. Prostate cancer typically grows slowly and initially remains confined to the prostate gland, where it may not cause serious harm. However, some types of prostate cancer can be aggressive and spread quickly to other parts of the body, making timely detection and treatment crucial.

Risk Factors

Several factors may increase the risk of developing prostate cancer, including

- **Age:** The risk of developing prostate cancer increases with age, especially after the age of 50
- **Family history:** A family history of prostate cancer may increase the risk
- **Ethnicity:** Prostate cancer is more common in some ethnic groups, particularly in men of African descent
- **Obesity:** Obesity has been linked to a higher risk of aggressive prostate cancer
- **Diet:** A diet high in red meat or high-fat dairy products and low in fruits and vegetables may increase the risk of developing prostate cancer



Symptoms

In the early stages, prostate cancer may not cause any symptoms. As the cancer progresses, some common symptoms may include:

- Difficulty in urination
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Erectile dysfunction
- Pain or discomfort in the pelvic area
- Bone pain, especially in the spine, hips, or ribs (if the cancer has spread to the bones)

Diagnosis

Prostate cancer can be diagnosed through several tests, including:

- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE):** A doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to examine the prostate for any abnormalities



- **Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test:** A blood test that measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland. Elevated PSA levels may indicate the presence of prostate cancer
- **Biopsy:** A procedure in which a small sample of prostate tissue is removed and examined under a microscope to check for the presence of cancer cells

Treatment Options

The treatment for prostate cancer depends on various factors, including the stage of the cancer, overall health, and personal preferences. Treatment options may include:

- **Active observation:** Monitoring the cancer for any changes without immediate treatment
- **Surgery:** Surgical procedures such as Radical Prostatectomy may be recommended to remove the prostate gland
- **Radiation therapy:** High-energy rays are used to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours
- **Hormone therapy:** Lowering the levels of male hormones or blocking their effects to stop cancer cells from growing
- **Chemotherapy:** Medications are used to kill rapidly growing cells, including cancer cells
- **Immunotherapy:** Substances made by the body are used to boost the immune system and help the body destroy the cancer cells and fight cancer

Living with Prostate Cancer:

Living with prostate cancer can be challenging, but there are ways to manage the condition and improve the quality of life:

- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly
- Communicate openly with the healthcare provider about any concerns and questions
- Seek support from family, friends, or support groups
- Stay informed about the latest treatments and research
- Consider counselling or therapy to manage emotional and psychological challenges

Prevention

Although the exact cause of prostate cancer is unknown, one can reduce the risk by:

- Maintaining a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight
- Getting regular check-ups and discussing the need for prostate cancer screening with the healthcare provider if at risk

Remember, early detection and timely treatment can significantly improve the chances of successful management and recovery from prostate cancer. It's crucial to consult a healthcare professional for personalised advice and guidance.

