

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common malignancy diagnosed in American men, and it is the second most common cause of death due to cancer with roughly 30,000 men succumbing to it each year. In 2005, roughly 230,000 men in the United States will be diagnosed with this disease.

While all of the reasons as to why men may develop prostate cancer are unknown, certain risk factors, including age, race (it is more common in African Americans and less common in Asian Americans than in Caucasians), a family history and certain dietary tendencies have been identified. Fortunately, there are now better ways to diagnose, treat and prevent the disease.

The prostate gland enlarges as men age. It is difficult to distinguish symptoms of an enlarging prostate caused by cancerous or non-cancerous growth. Since most cancers arise in the outer portion of the gland, an abnormality often may be felt by your physician on a digital rectal exam (DRE).

Prostate specific antigen (PSA) levels in the blood rise as the prostate gland enlarges and rises even more rapidly if there is cancer in the prostate. For most men, an elevated PSA is not linked to prostate cancer. If a blood test shows an abnormal PSA, a prostate biopsy may be recommended. Prostate biopsies are usually performed as office procedures. If prostate cancer is found, tests may be recommended

to determine if the disease has spread beyond the prostate gland to other regions of the body, such as bones or lymph nodes.

If the cancer has not spread beyond the prostate, the doctor may discuss several means of management. This may include frequent monitoring, androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), prostatectomy and/or non-surgical therapies such as radiation, seed implant brachy therapy or freezing treatments. Considerable success aimed at stopping production of the male sex hormones has been found with each of these treatments, but all have potential side effects.

Growing evidence indicates that there are positive actions you can take to prevent prostate cancer from developing. These include avoiding diets that are very high in red meat and fat and increasing certain fruits and vegetables into the diet such as soy products, cooked tomatoes and cruciferous vegetables. Taking modest amounts of vitamins, especially Vitamin E and D, appear to be beneficial. Also, the medication Finasteride (Proscar) may reduce the incidence of prostate cancer.

For more information about prostate cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention, visit our website, urology.urmc.edu or talk to your physician about a referral. Please call (585) 275-2838 for additional information, or to make an appointment.