

National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer III: Community Networks Program

Prostate Cancer Fact Sheet

The prostate is a male sex gland, which produces a thick fluid that forms part of semen. It is about the size of a walnut located below the bladder and in front of the rectum. Abnormal growth of benign tissue in the prostate is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Malignant tumors are cancer.

What every man should know about Prostate cancer:

- † Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer found in American men, other than skin cancer.
- † Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men, second only to lung cancer.
- † The death rate for prostate cancer is going down because the disease is being found earlier.

Risk Factors:

- † **Age** - In the United States, prostate cancer is found mainly in men over age 55. The average age of patients at the time of diagnosis is 70. It is therefore, important for men over 40 to consider yearly checkups.
- † **Family History** - A man's risk for developing prostate cancer is higher if his father or brother has had the disease.
- † **Race** - African American men have the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world. This high rate has been seen only in the last few decades, which suggests that some environmental factors may be responsible.
- † **Fat and dietary factors** – Some evidence suggests that a diet high in animal fat may increase the risk of prostate cancer and a diet high in fruits and vegetables may decrease the risk. Studies are in progress to learn whether men can reduce their risk of prostate cancer by taking certain dietary supplements.
- † **Family history:** Men with close family members (father or brother) who have had prostate cancer are more likely to get it themselves, especially if their relatives were young when they got the disease.

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms

Early prostate cancer often does not cause symptoms. See a doctor or urologist (doctor specializing in diseases of urinary system) for any of the following symptoms. Only a doctor can determine if symptoms are caused by prostate cancer:

- † A need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- † Difficulty in starting or holding back urination
- † Inability to urinate
- † Weak or interrupted flow of urine
- † Painful or burning urination
- † Painful ejaculation
- † Blood in the urine or semen
- † Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs

GUIDELINES FOR EARLY DETECTION

The National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer III recommends consideration of yearly rectal exams and PSA's for all men over 40 to increase the chance of detecting prostate cancer early.

Researchers are doing studies to learn more about screening men for prostate cancer (checking for the disease in men who have no symptoms). They are studying the usefulness of the following screening methods alone and in combinations:

- † Digital rectal examination (DRE)
- † Transrectal ultrasound
- † Measurement of a prostate specific antigen level in the blood (PSA)

For more information about prostate cancer, how to find it early, or what questions to ask your doctor, contact the Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER, the National Prostate Cancer Coalition, Prostatenet.org, your local health department or The American Cancer Society.

For more information about the National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer III: Community Networks Program call, 1.800.724.118.5
www.nblic.org

(Revised 8/06)