

# Important Answers

## Regarding Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers found in men, other than skin cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that approximately 189,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. Each year over 30,000 men die from this disease. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men, exceeded only by lung cancer.

Approximately one out of every six American men will develop prostate cancer in his lifetime. Although men of any age can get prostate cancer, it is found most often in men over the age of 50. In fact more than 70% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over the age of 65.

### **Q: What is the prostate?**

**A:** This walnut-size sex gland is involved in producing the thick fluid that is part of semen. It is located at the base of the bladder, in front of the rectum and surrounds the upper part of the urethra, the tube which empties urine from the bladder out through the penis. The male hormone testosterone is made by the testicles, which the prostate uses in order to function properly.

### **RESOURCE SUPPORT**

For additional information about prostate cancer, the following resources are available:

#### **National Cancer Institute**

**Cancer Information Service (CIS)** 1-800-4-CANCER  
**CancerNet** [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

The Cancer Information Service (CIS) and CancerNet are National Cancer Institute programs that provide a nationwide telephone service and web site for cancer patients, their families and friends.

#### **American Cancer Society**

1-800-ACS-2345 [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is a voluntary organization with a national office in Atlanta, Georgia, and local facilities across the country. It supports research, patient education programs, and other services for family members. It also publishes and distributes free booklets on colon cancer and home care.

#### **Associated Pathology Medical Group, Inc. (APMG)**

[www.apmglab.com](http://www.apmglab.com)

APMG is the longest standing independent pathology practice in Silicon Valley. Our group consists of eight pathologists at two practice sites: Los Gatos and Santa Cruz, serving physicians throughout California. Our pathologists are outpatient and inpatient specialists that produce accurate, diagnostic reports within 24 hours in most instances. Abnormal cases are routinely peer-reviewed.



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# Prostate Cancer

One of the  
most important  
tools for  
better health –  
Information.

Knowledge is power.



**Q: Am I at risk?**

**A:** As men age, their risk for prostate cancer increases. Of all prostate cancers, 75% are diagnosed in men over the age of 65. African-Americans have the highest incidence of prostate cancer. Some studies indicate a higher rate in men with a family history of prostate cancer; however, it is not clear whether this is due to genetic or environmental factors.

**Q: What are the symptoms?**

**A:** Although an enlarged prostate gland is common in men over 50, any increased size should be investigated. An enlarged prostate gland distorts the flow of urine. When the bladder cannot empty completely, this generates a need to urinate more frequently, especially at night. When experiencing symptoms such as these, a physician should be consulted to determine if prostate cancer or some other condition could be the cause.

**Q: How is prostate cancer detected?**

**A:** As recommended by the American Cancer Society, all men 40 and over should have a digital rectal exam as part of their regular annual physical checkup. In addition, it is recommended that men aged 50 and over have an annual prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test.

The level of PSA in the blood may rise in men who have prostate cancer or another condition

call Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH). Even though these procedures don't provide a definitive diagnosis for prostate cancer, your doctor will take the test results into consideration when recommending whether further medical evaluation should be undertaken, such as transrectal ultrasound (TRUS).

**PATHOLOGY TESTING**

**Q: How is prostate cancer diagnosed?**

**A:** The PSA level in your blood may be tested to determine if your levels are elevated. However, this test does not have the required specificity for separating patients with prostate cancer from those with BPH. Should initial test results be indicative of cancer, your physician may require that a biopsy be performed. The prostate biopsy procedure is the main method used to diagnose prostate cancer. In obtaining a biopsy, your physician performs a surgical procedure using a very thin needle to remove small pieces of prostate tissue from your prostate gland that appears abnormal or suspicious. The tissue collected by needle is then sent to a diagnostic laboratory for microscopic examination of potential cancer cells. The microscopic evaluation is performed by a pathologist. If cancer cells are discovered, the pathologist can then assist your physician in determining the stage and extent of the disease process.

**TREATMENT OPTIONS**

**Q: Do I have a choice of treatment?**

**A:** Yes. There are several generally accepted options for treating prostate cancer which are dependent on a number of factors such as age, the stage of the disease, the grade of cancer, general health, as well as any concerns you may have regarding the treatment process and potential side effects. Thus, it becomes important for you to discuss thoroughly the options with your doctor regarding an effective treatment plan specifically designed for you.

*This information is not intended to provide specific medical or professional advice. Your physician should provide definitive medical advice, as well as answers to your medical-related questions.*



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