

Prostate Cancer: Prevention and Screening of the Disease

What is prostate cancer?

- Prostate cancer is when cells within your prostate grow abnormally.

What causes prostate cancer?

There is not one single cause of prostate cancer. However, there are some factors that make having prostate cancer more likely:

- Family history (if your brother or dad had prostate cancer you are twice as likely to get it)
- Age (after 50 years old your risk of getting prostate cancer increases)
- Race (you are more likely to get prostate cancer if you are of African or Caribbean descent)
- Lifestyle (if you smoke, are overweight, not physically active, or eat a diet high in red meat you have a higher chance of getting prostate cancer)

How do I know if I have prostate cancer?

- Often, many men do not know if they have prostate cancer. It is common in the early stages of this disease to not have any symptoms.
- A biopsy is a test that can definitively determine if someone has prostate cancer. During a biopsy your doctor takes samples of prostate tissue. A pathologist then examines this tissue under a microscope. If the tissue looks abnormal it may be prostate cancer.

If I had symptoms from prostate cancer, what would they be?

- Cancer in the prostate may put pressure on the tube (urethra) that drains urine out of the body. Symptoms of prostate cancer can include difficulty urinating, slow stream, feeling as though you are not getting all your urine out of your body, urinating many times a night, blood in the urine or semen, or pain in groin, bone or low back that is not from exercise or from being hurt.

*The above symptoms are also symptoms of diseases that are not prostate cancer. If you have any of these symptoms, please consult with a medical professional to rule out prostate cancer.

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Screening for Prostate Cancer

What are the screening tests for prostate cancer?

It is recommended to have an annual blood test called a Prostate Specific Antigen test (PSA) and Digital Rectal Exam (DRE). If these tests are abnormal, a biopsy may be ordered.

How do I get an annual PSA and DRE test?

- Ask your physician or nurse practitioner. If you do not have access to a physician or nurse practitioner, you can request a PSA test through TELUS Health (download the TELUS Health My Care app). If your *PSA level comes back abnormal, TELUS health will contact you. It may then be recommended by the TELUS health physician for you to have a DRE or a biopsy. Depending on where you live and the supports available, TELUS health may have a physician that you can see to have this follow up testing.

*It is important to keep track of your PSA levels each year. A slow rise in PSA levels over time may be the first sign that you have prostate cancer.

Prevention of Prostate Cancer

Can I do anything to prevent prostate cancer?

Although you cannot control your family history, age, or race, there are lifestyle changes that can lower your chances of getting prostate cancer. Changes include eating healthy, exercising, and maintaining your weight.

What kind of diet helps prevent prostate cancer?

- Eating more plant-based foods (vegetables, fruits, beans/lentils), eating less animal foods (steak, beef), limiting the amount of processed foods, eating healthy fats (avocados, healthy oils), and eating a diet high in fiber (fiber is filling which helps people eat less – keeps weight down) can help decrease your chances of developing prostate cancer.

What kind of exercise should I do?

- Exercising 3-5 times per week, 10-40 minutes per workout, can help decrease your chances of developing prostate cancer.

Who can I turn to if I have any questions?

- If you have any questions related to prostate cancer, you can talk to a nurse at Island Prostate Centre in Victoria. Call us, email us, or ask for a zoom meeting.
- You do not need a doctor's referral to contact us. We are free of charge and strive to provide a safe experience for everyone, without judgement or bias.