

Malignant neoplasms in the prostate

Very common, but with high survival rates

There were 1.3 million new prostate cancer cases in 2018¹, but the slow growth rate of the tumors (or “malignant neoplasms”) makes it a highly manageable illness.

A malignant neoplasm is a cancerous tumor that grows in the prostate gland, a walnut-shaped male reproductive gland just below the bladder that controls the flow of semen. With early diagnosis, most men with this type of cancer can live for years with no problems.²

Prostate cancer is often a slow-growing disease. Because of this, you are more likely to die from other causes before you die from prostate cancer, and you are also more likely to catch it earlier if you get annual screening tests.

What causes prostate cancer?

As with many cancers, the causes aren't known. Neoplasms are generally discovered more frequently in men who are older, African-American, or have a family history of the disease. The male sex hormone testosterone also contributes to the cancer's growth.

While the number of men diagnosed with prostate cancer remains high, so does the number of men who get it and live. Survival rates³ after diagnosis of common types of prostate cancer are:

5 years: 99%
10 years: 98%
15+ years: 96%

Can prostate cancer be found early?

Early screening is highly recommended as a significant step in prostate health. Prostate cancer can often be found before symptoms start by testing the amount of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) in a man's blood or by the digital rectal exam, in which the doctor puts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to feel the prostate gland.

There is no question that screening can help find many prostate cancers early, but there are still questions about whether the benefits of screening outweigh the risks for most men. There are clearly both pros and cons to the prostate cancer screening tests in use today. Currently, the American Cancer Society recommends that men thinking about getting screened for prostate cancer “should make informed decisions based on available information, discussion with their doctor, and their own views on the possible benefits, risks, and limits of prostate cancer screening.”

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¹<https://www.wcrf.org/dietandcancer/cancer-trends/prostate-cancer-statistics>

²<https://www.webmd.com/prostate-cancer/prostate-cancer-basics#1-3>

³<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/prostate-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/survival-rates.html>

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