

3 Essential Things to Know About Prostate Cancer

About one out of every eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point. Yet, as common as this cancer is, many people still don't know a lot about it. Here are three key facts every man should know.

1 The risk of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50.

Age is the most common risk factor for this cancer. And more than two-thirds of new cases occur in men older than 65 years of age. Other factors that may increase your risk include being African American or having a father or brother who developed the disease.

What if Treatment Isn't Required?

In many cases, prostate cancer grows quite slowly. Older men and those in poor overall health may opt to avoid treatment for now. Instead, their healthcare provider may recommend watchful waiting or active surveillance, where the provider will continue to monitor the prostate cancer. If anything changes, treatment may be reconsidered.

2 Not every man needs to be tested for prostate cancer.

The prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test measures how much PSA (a protein) is present in your blood. A high PSA level could be a sign of prostate cancer, but it might also be caused by a prostate infection, benign enlargement of the prostate or other noncancerous causes.

The American Cancer Society recommends that men talk with their healthcare providers and make informed choices about whether PSA testing is right for them.

3 The outlook is excellent for most men with prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer can be life-threatening once it spreads to distant parts of the body. But when it's caught earlier, the five-year relative survival rate is nearly 100%. The five-year survival rate for all stages of prostate cancer combined is 98%.

This means that, on average, men with prostate cancer are nearly as likely as those without cancer to have long lives.



Sources include the American Cancer Society, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute.