

# What You Should Know About Prostate Cancer

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men (after skin cancer), but it can often be treated successfully.
- Prostate cancer begins when cells in the prostate gland start to grow out of control. The prostate is a gland found only in males.
- Prostate cancer is more likely to develop in older men and in non-Hispanic Black men.
- About 6 cases in 10 are diagnosed in men who are 65 or older, and it is rare in men under 40. The average age of men at diagnosis is about 66.
- Prostate cancer can be a serious disease, but most men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not die from it.
- Researchers have found several factors that might affect a man's risk of getting prostate cancer:
  - Age – Prostate cancer is rare in men <40, but the chance of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50).
  - Race/Ethnicity – Prostate cancer develops more often in men of African descent, and when it does develop in these men, they tend to be younger.
  - Geography – Prostate cancer is most common in North America, northwestern Europe, Australia, and the Caribbean islands; it is less common in Asia, Africa, Central America, and South America.
  - Family history – Having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles a man's risk of developing this disease. The risk is much higher for men with several affected relatives, particularly if their relatives were young when the cancer was found.
  - Gene Changes – Several inherited gene changes/mutations (e.g., BRCA1, BRCA2, Lynch syndrome) seem to raise prostate cancer risk, but they account for only a small percentage of cases overall.
- The effects of body weight, physical activity, and diet on prostate cancer risk aren't completely clear, but men may be able to lower their risk by maintaining a healthy weight, keeping physically active, and eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and whole grains and avoiding/limiting red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages, and highly processed foods.
- Prostate cancer can often be found early by testing for prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels in a man's blood. Another way to find prostate cancer is a digital rectal exam (DRE). If the results of either of these tests is abnormal, further testing (such as a prostate biopsy) is often done to determine if a man has cancer.
- If prostate cancer is found because of screening, it's more likely to be at an earlier, more treatable stage than if no screening were done. While this might make it seem like screening would always be a good thing, there are still issues surrounding screening that make it unclear if the benefits outweigh the risks for most men.
- Neither the PSA test nor the DRE is 100% accurate. These tests can sometimes have abnormal results even when a man does not have cancer (known as a false-positive result), or normal results even when a man does have cancer (known as a false-negative result).
- Finding and treating all prostate cancers early might seem to make sense, but some prostate cancers grow so slowly that they would never cause a man problems during his lifetime. Because of screening, some men may be diagnosed with a prostate cancer that they would have never known about otherwise; it would never have led to their death, or even caused any symptoms.
- The question of screening for prostate cancer is personal and complex one; check your healthcare coverage and discuss your personal risks and potential benefits with your healthcare provider to determine if PSA or DRE screening are right for you.

Source: American Cancer Society ([cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org))