

Prostate cancer - the symptoms and treatment

12 JUNE 2023

Prostate cancer usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs for many years. It's important to be aware of the risk factors and symptoms, so an individual can get it checked out quickly.

IS AN INDIVIDUAL AT RISK?

The causes of prostate cancer are largely unknown. However, certain things can increase your risk of developing the condition:

Age - the chances of developing prostate cancer increase as we get older. Most cases develop in men aged 50 or older.

Ethnicity - for reasons not yet understood, prostate cancer is more common in men of African-Caribbean or African descent, and less common in Asian men.

Family history - men whose father or brother have been affected by prostate cancer under the age of 70, or where there is a family history, are at a slightly increased risk themselves of developing the condition.

Weight - recent research also suggests that obesity increases the risk of prostate cancer.

THE SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE CANCER

Symptoms don't usually appear until the prostate is large enough to affect the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the penis (urethra). When this happens, an individual may notice things like:

- An increased need to urinate
- Straining while urinating
- A feeling that the bladder hasn't fully emptied
- Pain when urinating (this is rare)
- Blood in the urine (this is rare)

These symptoms shouldn't be ignored, but it doesn't mean the individual has prostate cancer. It's more likely they're caused by something else, such as prostate cancer enlargement which is a common non-cancerous problem.



TREATMENT

The 3 risk groups system

Some doctors use an older system that divides prostate cancer into 3 risk groups:

- Low risk prostate cancer (CPG 1)
- Medium risk prostate cancer (CPG 2 and CPG 3)
- High risk prostate cancer (CPG 4 and CPG 5)

Treatment for CPG 1

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy)

Treatment for CPG 2

- Active surveillance
- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy on its own or with hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with or without external radiotherapy and hormone therapy

Treatment for CPG 3

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy and hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with external radiotherapy and hormone therapy

Treatment for CPG 4 and CPG 5

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- External radiotherapy with hormone therapy
- Internal radiotherapy (brachytherapy) with external radiotherapy and hormone therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone therapy

SUPPORT

A cancer diagnosis, and even the prospect of one, can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for an individual and their loved ones. Therefore, take comfort in knowing PHC have dedicated cancer nurses available, via the phone, to provide support from day one.

DEDICATED CANCER NURSE

If an individual is diagnosed with cancer, we can put them in touch with our Dedicated Nurse Service because we know that a swift diagnosis and prompt treatment access must go hand in hand with genuine help, support and understanding from people who truly care.

Every one of our friendly nurses understands what a diagnosis like this means. The individual might take comfort in discussing their symptoms or talking through how to break the news to the people they care about. Whatever they need, wherever they need it, one of the dedicated nurses is waiting to talk.