

BPH & prostate cancer

It is important to remember that BPH is NOT prostate cancer. It is possible, however, for a man to have both BPH and prostate cancer.

This is why it is important to have your prostate checked regularly from the age of 50 whether you are having any of the listed symptoms or not. If you have a family history of prostate cancer you are two or three times more at risk than other men and you should discuss with your doctor the option of having an annual check-up from the age of 40.

Keep in mind that in its early stages prostate cancer does not usually present any symptoms, so a regular check for this will help detect prostate cancer in its early (and usually more successfully treatable) stages, as well as indicate any other prostate problems such as BPH.

**Please contact
Prostate Cancer Foundation
by phoning
0800 4 PROSTATE
(0800 4 77678)**

Or email: nationaloffice@prostate.org.nz

Or write to the Secretary:
P O Box 11006, Musselburgh,
Dunedin 9049

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PCF National Helpline 0800 4 PROSTATE (0800 4 77678)

Email: nationaloffice@prostate.org.nz

website: www.prostate.org.nz

Registered NZ Charity No. CC30635

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand Inc. is a New Zealand organisation formed to provide information, counselling and comfort to those diagnosed with prostate cancer or other prostate problems. PCF is a national, non-profit, volunteer organisation comprised largely of prostate cancer survivors.

Foundation Mission Statement

'To create or enhance an environment to empower men to make informed decisions about the diagnosis and treatment for prostate cancer.'

What is
BPH
and what does it
mean?



What is this thing called a prostate that can cause so much trouble?

The prostate is a male sex gland. It is about the size of a walnut and is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It surrounds part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. It is made up largely of muscular and glandular tissues and its main function is to produce fluid for semen which transports sperm. During male orgasm muscular contractions squeeze the prostate's fluid into the urethra. About the age of 40 a man's prostate begins to enlarge and create a condition known as Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). The likelihood of developing BPH increases with age and eventually about 80% of men have enlarged prostates but many will never have symptoms. If you do have any of the symptoms outlined in this brochure you may well have BPH and you should consult your doctor to check for BPH and prostate cancer.

What does Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia mean?

Benign

Not malignant or cancerous. Benign growths don't generally spread to other organs. Nor do they generally come back after they are removed.

Prostatic

To do with the prostate.

Hyperplasia

Enlargement or swelling. So we get BPH!

What is BPH?

Quite simply it is the enlargement of the prostate. For some reason not yet fully understood, a man's prostate begins to enlarge when he is around 40.

About 80% of men will have an enlarged prostate but many will not know this unless they get these symptoms:

- A weak urinary stream
- Difficulty starting urination
- Frequent urination
- Difficulty postponing urination
- Waking frequently at night to urinate
- Stopping and starting while urinating
- Blood in urine
- Pain or burning on urination

What do I do if I have these symptoms?

Consult your doctor. List your symptoms for your doctor. Write them down, count the number of times you need to urinate at night if that is one of your symptoms.

What will the doctor do?

Your doctor will need to establish exactly what your problem may be and this will depend upon your symptoms. He/she will probably conduct a DRE (digital rectal examination) to feel if your prostate is enlarged. You should also be asked to have a blood test to determine your level of PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) which is a useful indicator to the doctor about what might be happening with your prostate. Your doctor might also suggest you consult a urologist, a specialist in diagnosing and treating prostate problems.

If a DRE indicates you have BPH several other tests may be carried out. These include such things as a urine flow test to determine if your kidneys are functioning properly (this might well be done at the same time your blood sample is taken for your PSA test).

Treatment options

These will very much depend upon what your doctor/urologist finds and can vary from a course of medication to surgery or a combination of both. Every man is different and the treatment options have to be chosen to suit your particular case. Make sure you discuss your treatment in detail with your doctor and fully understand why your particular treatment has been chosen and what you must do to help ensure its success.

Medical treatment;

A number of medicines are available to treat BPH but they are also used to treat high blood pressure. If you don't have high blood pressure this can sometimes have an undesirable side effect. There are, however, some new medicines available in New Zealand that only target the prostate and not high blood pressure. At this time they do not receive any Government subsidy, so you will need to talk this through with your doctor as well as looking at the cost with your Pharmacy.

Surgical treatment;

Your doctor may recommend a transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) or a Holmium laser prostatectomy. This is not regarded as major surgery and simply involves creating a larger diameter urethra to enable urine to flow more readily from the bladder.