



Prostate Cancer

The prostate is a small gland in the pelvis that is found only in men. About the size of a walnut, it is located between the penis and the bladder. It surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the penis.

The main function of the prostate is to help in the production of semen. The prostate produces a thick white fluid that is then liquefied by a special protein known as prostate-specific antigen (PSA). The fluid is mixed with sperm, produced by the testicles, to create semen.

The prostate may get bigger as men get older. This causes no problems for two out of three men over 50. But if the prostate gets bigger it can press on the urethra and cause urinary symptoms. This is called benign prostate disease or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). It usually affects men over 50 but is not cancer, and is treatable.

Symptoms

Prostate cancer normally causes no symptoms until the cancer has grown large enough to put pressure on the urethra. This normally results in problems associated with urination.

Symptoms can include:

- needing to urinate more frequently, often during the night
- needing to rush to the toilet
- difficulty in starting to urinate (hesitancy)
- straining or taking a long time while urinating
- weak flow
- feeling that your bladder has not emptied fully

These symptoms shouldn't be ignored but they do not mean you definitely have prostate cancer. Many men's prostates get larger as they get older due to a non-cancerous condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia or prostate enlargement.

Never ignore the symptoms. It is important to visit your GP for investigation.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. Each year in the UK about 36,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer. It accounts for 25% of all newly diagnosed cases of cancer in men.