

A short guide to prostate health

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What your man needs to know about his diet.

What Does the Prostate Do?

The prostate is a walnut sized organ found at the base of the bladder in men. It surrounds the urethra, the tube through which men urinate. Its role in the body is to produce an essential fluid for the ejaculate that is important for normal fertility. Unfortunately, as men age, for reasons that are not clear, the prostate continues to grow and can cause urinary symptoms due to its strategic location around the urethra. This is similar to a clamp being placed across a garden hose. Termed BPH, prostatic enlargement may cause symptoms such as frequent urination, slow urinary stream, hesitancy, night time urination and dribbling. These symptoms are very common and affect 50% of men by age 60 and can be quite bothersome. Inflammation of the prostate, termed prostatitis, can produce similar symptoms but, typical of any infection, usually has a faster onset and is treated with antibiotics.

The prostate can also harbor cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common type of non-skin cancer in men, affecting 1 in 8 Americans during their lifetime. The risk of having prostate cancer increases with age (especially over age 50), having a father, brother or uncle with prostate cancer before age 60, being of Afro-American ethnicity, and with high fat diets. Usually, it is not symptomatic and appears to be unrelated to BPH. It is detected on physical examination of the prostate or by a blood test called prostate specific antigen (PSA). When caught early, it is quite treatable.

The Prostate and your Diet

Some evidence suggests that a healthy diet may influence the development of prostatic enlargement or cancer. Diets rich in antioxidants such as green tea, selenium, lycopene (cooked tomatoes) and possibly taking vitamins A, C, and E may reduce the risk of cancer. Lower vitamin D levels that normally occur with age might also increase the risk of prostate cancer. Reducing the intake of dietary fat, especially animal fat, and increasing soy protein in the diet may also reduce prostate cancer risk. Prostatitis may be helped by drinking lots of fluids, discontinuing spicy foods and caffeine containing drinks and by avoiding activities like bicycling that put undo pressure on the prostate.

Preventing Prostate Growth or Cancer

There may be lifestyle changes that prevent prostatic growth or cancer with age, In addition to a diet that is low-fat including predominantly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and soy products (unrefined), moderate exercise like walking along with stress reduction (yoga, meditation) may have benefit in this regard. For treatment of prostatic enlargement (BPH) after it occurs, the FDA has approved six drugs. Two of these medications actually reduce prostate size by 1/3 and may have also been shown to reduce the risk of prostate cancer by 25%. Termed DHT blockers, these two medications prevent the conversion of testosterone to its metabolite dihydrotestosterone (DHT). This works because DHT is the male hormone that is most active in the prostate. Thus, changes in medications, lifestyle, and dietary intake may all improve prostate health, an organ that certainly should not be ignored as men age.

About Dr. Paul Turek

Dr. Paul Turek, who is a leading surgeon and former endowed chair professor at UCSF, is leading the charge to make men aware of the importance of paying attention to their reproductive health. Research has shown (some of which is Dr. Turek's research at UCSF) that reproductive dysfunctions in men are early indicators of severe life threatening health issues like cancer and cardiovascular disease. Dr. Turek wants to make sure men are checked by a men's health specialist when they are having symptoms.

The Turek Clinic is a next-generation men's healthcare medical practice specializing in issues facing reproductive age men, including male infertility, vasectomies, vasectomy reversal, varicocele repair, and other minimally invasive procedures. The practice was founded by Dr. Paul Turek a leading surgeon and former endowed chair professor at the University of California San Francisco in May, 2008. Dr. Turek's work combines innovative and cutting edge techniques with the wisdom of old-world medicine to treat and solve the problems of men ages 21 to 55 years of age.

Website: <http://www.TheTurekClinic.com>

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