



Testing for Prostatic Disease

The Prostate is a gland approximately the size of a walnut. It is located below the bladder in front of the rectum, and surrounds the base of the urethra. The Prostate Gland produces an alkaline milky solution which contributes to seminal fluid.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF PROSTATE DISEASE?

Cancer of the Prostate Gland

This is the second most common type of malignancy in Australian men and the incidence increases with age. For example, a man aged 50 years has a 1.4% chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer within the next 10 years, while an 80 year old man has a 10.2% chance.

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)

As men age, hormonal changes in the Prostate may result in enlargement of the Prostate. This can constrict the urethra, making it difficult to empty the bladder. 50% of 60 year old men will have evidence of BPH. BPH is NOT cancer nor does it lead to cancer.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATIC DISEASE?

Symptoms of both BPH and cancer of the Prostate include:

- Difficulty in emptying the bladder, resulting in the need to pass urine more frequently
- Difficulty in starting the flow of urine
- Sudden and urgent need to pass urine
- Pain or burning sensation while voiding.

HOW IS PROSTATIC DISEASE DETECTED?

Early detection is best achieved by means of both a test for the blood level of Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) and a rectal examination. Men over 50 should have these examinations during their regular (yearly) check-up. If a man has a father or brother diagnosed with Prostate Cancer before the age of 60 years, he is at increased risk and these checks should begin at age 45 years. As well, all men who experience symptoms should seek medical advice as soon as possible.

HOW IS PROSTATIC DISEASE TREATED?

Both Prostate Cancer and BPH can be treated successfully. In fact, more men will die WITH Prostate Cancer than will die FROM Prostate Cancer. There are both medical and surgical options available. Your doctor will advise you on the best treatment option in your case.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact our Customer Service Centre.

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HPG-1049-W-001 (06/10)
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