

# Early-stage Prostate Cancer

## What You Should Know



The prostate and seminal vesicles are part of the male reproductive system. The prostate sits below the bladder, in front of the rectum, while the seminal vesicles are two smaller glands attached to the back of the prostate. The main job of the prostate and seminal vesicles is to make fluid for semen.

Prostate cancer develops when abnormal cells form and grow in the prostate gland. Not all abnormal growths, also called tumors, are cancerous (malignant). Some tumors are not cancerous (benign), such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), and are not life threatening. Cancerous growths, such as prostate cancer, can spread (metastasize) to nearby organs and tissues such as the bladder or rectum, or to other parts of the body.

### What is Early-stage Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer stays “localized” when cancer cells are found only in the prostate or even a little bit beyond it, but do not move to other parts of the body. If the cancer moves to other parts of the body, it is called “advanced” prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is often grouped into four stages.

- **Early-stage | Stages I & II:** The tumor has not spread beyond the prostate. This is often called “early-stage” or “localized” prostate cancer.
- **Locally Advanced | Stage III:** Cancer has spread outside the prostate, but only to nearby tissues. This is often called “locally advanced prostate cancer.”
- **Advanced | Stage IV:** Cancer has spread outside the prostate to other parts such as the lymph nodes, bladder, bones, liver or lungs. This stage is often called “advanced prostate cancer.”

### What Causes Prostate Cancer?

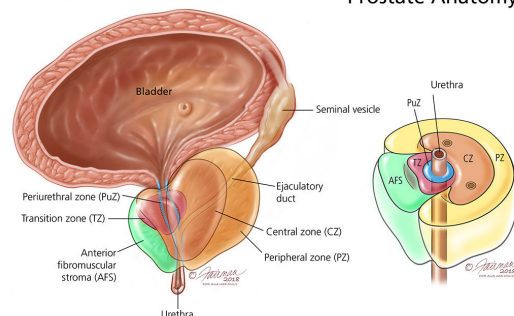
The cause of prostate cancer is unknown, but researchers know many things can increase a man’s risk for the disease.

- **Age:** As men age, their risk of getting prostate cancer goes up.
- **Ethnicity:** African American men have a higher rate of the disease. Prostate cancer occurs less often in Asian American and Hispanic/Latino men than in non-Hispanic white men.
- **Family History:** Men who have a history of prostate cancer in their family face a higher risk of getting the disease. Having family members with breast and ovarian cancer also raises a man’s risk for prostate cancer.
- **Weight:** Studies link being overweight in your 50s and later to a greater risk of advanced prostate cancer. Doctors advise keeping to a healthy weight to reduce risk.

### What are the Signs of Prostate Cancer?

In its early stages, prostate cancer may have no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they can be urinary symptoms like those of an enlarged prostate or Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH).

Prostate Anatomy



# Early-stage Prostate Cancer

## What You Should Know

Talk with your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms:

- Dull pain in the lower pelvic zone
- Frequent need to pass urine
- Trouble passing urine, pain, burning or weak urine flow
- Blood in the urine (hematuria)
- Painful ejaculation
- Pain in the lower back, hips or upper thighs
- Loss of hunger
- Loss of weight
- Bone pain

### How is Early-stage Prostate Cancer Tested?

Tests can help to find prostate cancer early, before it spreads. Early prostate cancer treatment may stop or slow the spread of cancer. There are a few different ways that prostate cancer can be diagnosed:

- **Blood tests** can measure a protein in your blood called the prostate-specific antigen (PSA). The PSA test is used to look for changes to the way your prostate produces PSA. A rapid rise in PSA may be a sign something is wrong.
- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)** is a physical exam used to help your doctor feel for changes in your prostate. The DRE is safe and easy but cannot spot early cancer by itself. It is often done with a PSA test.
- **Prostate biopsy** may be used to help make an accurate diagnosis. A biopsy is a tissue sample taken from your prostate or other organs to look for cancer cells. The biopsy removes small pieces of tissue for review under a microscope. The biopsy takes 10 to 20 minutes. A pathologist (a doctor who classifies disease) looks for cancer cells within the samples.

### What are Early-stage Prostate Cancer Treatment Options?

Men with early-stage prostate cancer have a very good chance of survival. There are several options for treatment you may want to discuss with your doctor if you are diagnosed with early-stage, localized prostate cancer.

- **Active Surveillance** may be used for a small and slow-growing cancer.
- **Surgery** may be used to remove the prostate.
- **Radiation** therapy may be used to kill the cancer cells.
- **Cryotherapy** may be used for controlled freezing of the prostate gland.
- **High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU)** uses sound waves to heat the prostate, causing it to shrink.

Talking with a urologist and a radiation oncologist can help you make informed choices.

### About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, [UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions](https://UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions) or go to [UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist](https://UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist) to find a doctor near you.

### Disclaimer

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or healthcare provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For more information, visit [UrologyHealth.org/Download](https://UrologyHealth.org/Download) or call 800-828-7866.