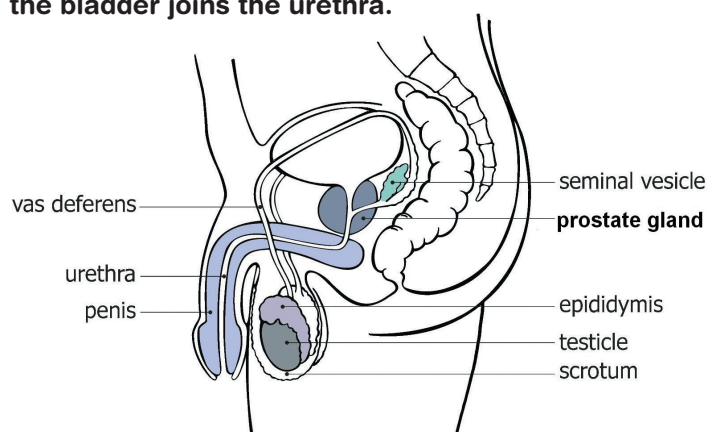


Early detection of prostate cancer



Prostate cancer is the growth of abnormal cells in the prostate gland. This gland is only found in males and is about the size of a walnut. It is situated where the bladder joins the urethra.



The cause of prostate cancer is not known and there is currently no clear prevention strategy to reduce the risk of developing this cancer. Apart from non-melanoma skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Australia, with more than 16,000 men diagnosed each year. It affects mostly men in the older age groups and is rare in men under 45 years of age.

What is the chance of a diagnosis of prostate cancer?*

For a man in his 40s	1 in 554
For a man in his 50s	1 in 45
For a man in his 60s	1 in 15
For a man in his 70s	1 in 11

*Does not take into account family history.

The chance of diagnosis is doubled in men who have a close relative diagnosed with prostate cancer. Men with a close relative diagnosed before the age of 60 are at a higher risk than someone whose relative was diagnosed later in life. Men at a greater risk due to family history should talk to their doctor.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

In its early stages, prostate cancer may not show any symptoms, though symptoms of early prostate cancer can include:

- Difficulty passing urine.
- A slow, interrupted flow of urine.
- Frequent passing of urine, including at night
- Incontinence.

Symptoms associated with advanced prostate cancer include:

- Blood in urine.
- Pain during urination.
- Lower back or pelvic pain.

These symptoms are also found in men who may have Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), a common, non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland. If you experience any unusual changes or these symptoms persist, visit your doctor.

How is prostate cancer detected?

There is no single, simple test to detect prostate cancer. It may be suspected by feeling the prostate during a rectal examination by your doctor and by a blood test to see if your prostate specific antigen (PSA) levels are above normal levels for your age.

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test is a blood test that measures the level of PSA in your blood. It does not specifically test for cancer. Virtually all PSA is produced by the prostate gland. The normal range for you will vary depending on your age, and a PSA above this range may indicate the possibility of prostate cancer.

Two thirds of cases of elevated PSA are due to non-cancerous conditions such as prostatitis and BPH.

Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) involves your doctor inserting a gloved finger into the rectum to feel the prostate gland. Some abnormality may be felt, but it is not possible to feel the entire prostate or a small cancer. One that is out of reach of the finger may be missed.

If either of these tests are positive, other tests are necessary to confirm a diagnosis of prostate cancer. It is likely that a trans-rectal ultrasound (TRUS) and biopsy will be needed.

Should I have a PSA test?

If you have no symptoms and are thinking about having a PSA test, you need to consider the risks and benefits. It is important to balance the benefit of detecting a prostate cancer early, against the risk that detection and treatment may not be necessary. Treatment may affect your lifestyle, however it may also save your life.

You should make your own decision about whether to be tested after discussion with your doctor. It is important for you to obtain good quality information to make an informed decision.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Where can I get reliable information?

Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia.

Cancer Council Australia website

(with links to state and territory Cancer Councils)
www.cancer.org.au

Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration

www.prostatehealth.org.au

Andrology Australia

www.andrologyaustralia.org