

# Wellness by the Month

## PROSTATE CANCER

### **What is Prostate Cancer?**

The prostate is a gland in the male reproductive system that makes and stores a component of semen. A healthy prostate is about the size of a walnut. Prostate cancer forms in the tissues of the prostate. Except for skin cancer, cancer of the prostate is the most common malignancy in American men. In most men with prostate cancer, the disease grows very slowly.

### **Who is at Risk?**

More than 70 percent of men diagnosed with this disease are over the age of 65. African American men have a substantially higher risk of prostate cancer than white men, including Hispanic men. There is some evidence that dietary factors are involved, such as eating a diet high in animal fat. Genetics may play a role as well.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Prostate cancer often does not cause symptoms for many years. By the time symptoms occur, the disease may have spread beyond the prostate. When symptoms do occur, they may include:

- Urinary problems: Not being able to urinate; having a hard time starting or stopping the urine flow; needing to urinate often, especially at night; having a weak urine flow.
- Pain or burning during urination.
- Difficulty having an erection.
- Blood in the urine or semen.
- Frequent pain in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs.

BPH or Benign Prostate Hypertrophy may also cause symptoms like these.

### **Best Defense: Early Detection**

Prostate cancer can usually be found in its early stages by having a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and a digital rectal exam (DRE). Talk to your doctor about what is right for you.

**UsTOO** is a grassroots organization started in 1990 by prostate cancer survivors to provide education and support programs for both men with prostate cancer and their loved ones. This organization is an active advocate for patients. Contact them at [www.ustoo.org](http://www.ustoo.org) or at their toll free patient support line at 1-800-80-Us TOO (1-800-808-7866).

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

[www.fightprostatecancer.org](http://www.fightprostatecancer.org)