

National Cancer Institute

What You Need
To Know About™

Prostate Cancer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health

National Cancer Institute Services

This booklet is only one of many free publications for people with cancer.

You may want more information for yourself, your family, and your friends.

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1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

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<http://www.cancer.gov>

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LiveHelp, NCI's instant messaging service
<https://livehelp.cancer.gov>

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cancergovstaff@mail.nih.gov

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1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

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1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848)

About This Booklet

This National Cancer Institute (NCI) booklet is for you—a man who has just been diagnosed with **prostate cancer**. In 2012, about 242,000 American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Words that may be new to you are shown in **bold**. See the **Words to Know** section on page 32 to learn what a new word means and how to pronounce it.

This booklet tells about medical care for men with prostate cancer. Learning about medical care for prostate cancer can help you take an active part in making choices about your care.

You can read this booklet from front to back. Or, you can read only the sections you need right now.

This booklet has lists of questions that you may want to ask your doctor. Many people find it helpful to take a list of questions to a doctor visit. To help remember what your doctor says, you can take notes. You may also want to have a family member or friend go with you when you talk with the doctor—to take notes, ask questions, or just listen.

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The Prostate

The prostate is part of a man's **reproductive system**. It's located in front of the **rectum** and under the bladder. (See picture on page 2.) The prostate surrounds the **urethra**, the tube through which urine flows.

A healthy prostate is about the size of a walnut. If the prostate grows too large, it squeezes the urethra. This may slow or stop the normal flow of urine.

The prostate is a **gland**. It makes part of the **seminal fluid**. During orgasm, the seminal fluid helps carry **sperm** out of the man's body as part of **semen**.

Cancer Cells

Cancer begins in **cells**, the building blocks that make up all tissues and organs of the body, including the prostate.

Normal cells in the prostate and other parts of the body grow and divide to form new cells as they are needed. When normal cells grow old or get damaged, they die, and new cells take their place.

Sometimes, this process goes wrong. New cells form when the body doesn't need them, and old or damaged cells don't die as they should. The buildup of extra cells often forms a mass of tissue called a growth or **tumor**.

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