

# Prostate Health

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## What is the prostate?

- Walnut-sized gland in the male reproductive system
- Produces the fluid that keeps sperm alive
- Positioned below the bladder

## What is prostate cancer?

- Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the prostate keep splitting, making new abnormal cells. These cells form a mass of tissue, called a growth or tumor. Tumors can invade and damage other tissue and organs.

## What are the symptoms?

- Not being able to pass urine
- Weak flow of urine
- Urine flow starts and stops
- The need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Pain or burning during urination
- Difficulty having an erection
- Blood in urine or semen
- Frequent pain in the lower back, hips or upper thighs

*If you have symptoms of prostate problems or concerns about prostate cancer, talk to your doctor.*

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among men and one of the leading causes of cancer death among men in Anne Arundel County.

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Anne Arundel County Department of Health

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

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## Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer

- Family History – higher risk if your father, brother or son had prostate cancer
- Age – the main risk factor. The chance for prostate cancer increases as you get older. In the United States, most men with prostate cancer are over the age of 65.
- Race – more common among African American men than white or Hispanic men.

## Screening

- **Digital Rectal Exam**

The doctor inserts a gloved finger into the rectum and feels the prostate through the rectal wall to check for hard lumpy areas.

- **The Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Blood Test**

PSA is a protein made by the prostate gland and is found in the blood. The amount of PSA in the blood can rise naturally as men age or if problems with the prostate are present. Sometimes the level of PSA may rise in men who have prostate cancer.

The digital rectal exam and PSA test can detect a problem in the prostate. However, they can't show whether the problem is cancer or a less serious condition. If you have abnormal test results, your doctor may suggest other tests to make a diagnosis.

## Better lifestyle choices now may prevent cancer later

### Lifestyle Changes That May Prevent Cancer

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Increase your physical activity to at least 30 minutes a day.
- Quit smoking now. It's never too late.

