

- After surgery, some men may lose their ability to control peeing (urinating). This is called incontinence. This is because the surgery sometimes damages the muscles around the prostate.
- Radiotherapy sometimes affects the bowel. This can cause diarrhoea in the weeks when you are having treatment. Sometimes it also damages the bowel, which will then need to be treated.

It's important to understand which side effects might happen before choosing a treatment. If you wish, you can ask to see another doctor and get a second opinion before deciding on treatment. Your doctor can help with this.

What about regular check-ups?

Some people choose to have regular PSA testing, others choose not to.

Cancer Council recommends you talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of PSA testing so you can make a decision that is right for you.

For further information call the Cancer Council or contact your local Aboriginal health service.



Organisation details



Men's Business

Prostate Problems



Cancer Council
Helpline
13 11 20
www.cancervic.org.au



Many men over 50 have problems with their waterworks which can mean something is wrong with their prostate. Most prostate problems are not caused by prostate cancer, however it is still a common cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

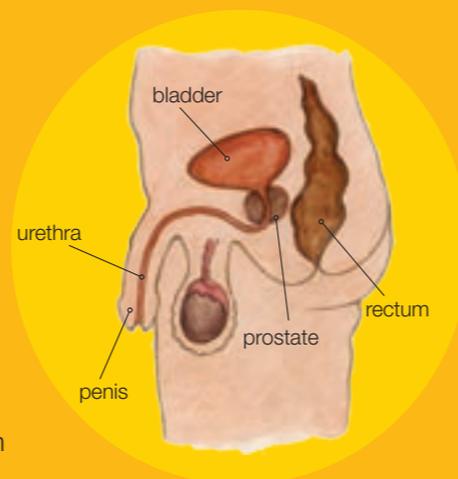
Reading this brochure should help you understand prostate problems. Ask your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal health worker if you would like more information.

The prostate

The picture right shows where the prostate is.

The prostate is about the size of a walnut. It makes some of the fluid in semen.

The prostate has a hole through the middle. The tube that takes urine from the bladder goes through this hole to the end of the pipi (penis).



Do you have a prostate problem?

Prostate problems can include:

- Needing to pee often, especially at night
- Trouble starting and stopping when you pee
- A weak flow
- Feeling like you haven't quite finished
- Feeling pain or burning when you pee
- Sometimes, blood in the pee.

If you have any of these problems, see your doctor. Your doctor, in most cases, can treat them.

Prostate problems that are not cancer BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia)

This is a swelling of the prostate caused by hormones. It can be treated with medicines or surgery to stop the prostate squeezing the urine tube (urethra).

Prostatitis

This is caused by an infection and is usually treated with antibiotics. Some men also need surgery to stop the swollen prostate from pressing on the urine tube (urethra).

How will the doctor find out what the problem is?

There are three different tests that the doctor may do to find what is causing the problem.

Rectal examination

Your doctor will feel the size, shape and texture of your prostate. Your doctor will do this by putting a gloved finger into your moom (rectum / back passage).

If the doctor finds something that doesn't feel right, you may need a biopsy (see below).

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test

Your doctor may take some blood from your arm using a needle. The blood will be tested to look for PSA. PSA is a protein made by the prostate.

If there's a lot of PSA in your blood, you may also need a biopsy.

Biopsy

If your doctor finds something unusual in the rectal examination or PSA test, they will refer you to a urologist. A urologist is an expert in the urine system.

The urologist may want to look more closely at the prostate. They will put a small ultrasound probe into your moom (rectum / back passage) and use it to look at an image of the prostate.

Small pieces of tissue from your prostate can be removed. The tissue goes to a laboratory to be tested to see if it is cancer. This is called a biopsy.

A biopsy is the only way to tell for sure if you have prostate cancer. If it is cancer, the biopsy will also show:

- if it needs treating
- how fast the cancer may grow.

Treatment for prostate cancer

If you have prostate cancer the decision to treat depends on whether the cancer has spread, your age, how healthy you are, and what you want.

If you have cancer and it has not spread

The doctor will advise one of these:

- Watchful waiting: the doctor does regular tests to see if the cancer has grown. If it has, treatment may be needed
- Surgery to remove the prostate
- Radiotherapy: using radiation (usually x-rays) to kill the cancer cells.

If you have cancer and it has spread

Sometimes prostate cancer spreads out of the prostate into other parts of the body. If this has happened the doctor might give you hormone treatment to stop the cancer or help slow it down.

Side effects from treatment

Surgery or radiotherapy for prostate cancer can cause problems.

- Some men can no longer get an erection. This is called impotence. The nerves that control an erection pass through the prostate. Sometimes the surgeons can't help damaging these nerves, because of the position of the cancer.