



The prostate is a male reproductive gland about the size of a walnut. It is located in front of the rectum and just below the bladder. It is wrapped around the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. The prostate's main function is to supply the fluid for sperm during ejaculation.

What is prostate cancer?

Cancer is a disease characterized by the un-controlled growth and potential spread of abnormal (malignant) cells. Cancer cells do not necessarily grow faster than normal cells, but they persist longer or divide more times during their lifetime. Consequently, cancer cells accumulate, competing with normal, healthy tissue for nutrients. When cancer affects the prostate, cancerous cells usually start in the outer part of the gland. The tumor may then spread to the inner part of the prostate. If the cancer remains within the gland itself, it is considered "localized." If it spreads to outside tissues, it is called "metastasized" cancer. As with all cancers, this metastasizing of malignant cells is what makes it a threat.

DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

Early prostate cancer often has no symptoms, so regular exams by your physician are recommended. The first symptoms, as the cancer grows, are usually urinary problems, including difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, or a burning sensation. As the tumor grows, it can put pressure on surrounding organs, causing further discomfort.

How is prostate cancer diagnosed?

Prostate cancer is primarily diagnosed through the use of two widely- used tests- the PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test that checks for a cancer indicator in the blood, and the DRE (Digital Rectal Exam) designed to find abnormalities in the prostate. If either of these tests is abnormal, your doctor may perform an ultrasound exam and tissue biopsy to check for cancerous cells.

What are my treatment options?

Men with localized prostate cancer have several options for treatment including: Surgical removal of the prostate gland (radical prostatectomy), external beam radiation therapy (EBRT), radioactive seed implants/Brachy Therapy (either alone or in combination with EBRT), high dose rate Brachy Therapy (HDR), cryotherapy, and hormone treatment.