

PROSTATE CANCER (LOCALIZED)

What is localized prostate cancer?

Localized prostate cancer is confined to the prostate. The cancer has not spread to other tissues or organs.

What causes prostate cancer?

There is no known cause for this cancer. A family history of prostate cancer is a risk factor, as well as being of African descent.

What are the symptoms?

Men with early prostate cancer often do not have symptoms. Because of this, doctors recommend tests such as the **prostate specific antigen** or **PSA** (substance secreted by prostate cells, used in diagnosing cancer). This test helps to find prostate cancer even in men without symptoms.

When symptoms do occur, they include

- Frequent night urination
- An interrupted urine flow
- Blood in the urine or **semen** (the bodily fluid in males that contains sperm)
- Blockage of urine
- Back pain

What tests will I need?

A physical examination is done, including a rectal exam. Because the prostate is near the rectum, your doctor will insert a gloved finger into your rectum to feel for changes.

Other tests will include:

- The PSA test
- A biopsy. This is the removal of a small amount of tissue to examine it for disease or infection
- Prostate MRI

Prostate cancer is usually measured by “grade” and “stage.”

- Grade describes how fast the tumor might be growing. One common grading system doctors use is the **Gleason Grade** (determination of how quickly prostate cancer may grow or spread).
- Stage. This describes the size and location of the cancer.

How is prostate cancer treated?

Treatments include:

- **Watchful Waiting:** Patients are seen often with regular exams. If cancer spreads, more treatment is discussed.
- **Radical Prostatectomy:** This is surgery to remove the entire prostate. It also takes out nearby tissues such as lymph nodes to see if the cancer has spread.
- **Radiation Therapy:** This uses high-dose x-rays to kill cancer cells. The external type consists of a beam of radiation directed at the cancer site from outside the body. The internal type involves placing radioactive pellets or rods directly into the prostate. Sometimes, these types are combined.

Your doctor may also suggest some form of medication including **hormone therapy** (using hormones to stop cells from growing) and **chemotherapy** (using drugs to kill cancer cells). Generally, these are not used as often for localized prostate cancers.

You should discuss these and other treatment options with your doctor.

What can I expect?

Your doctor will help you decide what treatment is best for you. You will have regular follow-up appointments. Keep in mind that prostate cancer is considered very treatable when detected early and followed closely.

Where can I learn more?

National Cancer Institute
National Institutes of Health
800-422-6237
<http://www.cancer.gov>

American Cancer Society
800-227-2345
<http://www.cancer.org>