

An Overview of Prostate Cancer

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What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is the most common cause of cancer in men, excluding skin cancer. Over 200,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year. Almost 90 percent of men with prostate cancer will survive the disease.

How is the Cancer Diagnosed?

- Biopsy
- Rectal exam
- Elevated PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test

How Advanced is the Cancer?

Determining how advanced your cancer is depends upon several factors:

- The Gleason score
- The cancer stage
- The PSA level

Gleason score (ranges from two-10) measures how abnormal the prostate cancer cells appear under a microscope.

Cancer stage is a measure of how far the cancer has spread from the prostate. The lowest stage is when cancer remains in the prostate. The stage increases as the cancer travels from the prostate to lymph nodes and eventually other parts of the body.

How is Prostate Cancer Treated?

The best treatment will be an individual approach determined by you and your doctor.

Early-Stage Treatments Include:

Radiation Therapy – provided by a radiation oncologist. This therapy is well-tolerated in prostate-cancer patients.

Surgery – performed by a urologist. Advances in surgical techniques have reduced recovery time and long-term side effects.

Even when a cure is not possible, there are still many options for treatment. Prostate cancer is slow growing. Therefore, the majority of patients may live long lives even if the cancer is not completely cured.

Advanced-Stage Treatments Include:

Active surveillance – involves the close observation of the patient and initiation of treatments when symptoms develop.

Androgen therapy – is based upon removing the testosterone that cancer requires to grow. If testosterone is blocked, then the growth of the cancer may be slowed or regress.

Chemotherapy – sometimes chemotherapy is necessary if other therapies are not successful.

In advanced-stage prostate cancer, the goal of treatment is to reduce symptoms and increase the quality of life. Androgen therapy can often be used for years to maintain quality of life.