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Health Sunday Topic: Understanding Prostate Changes

Dr. Arnett Coleman, an Internist at Metropolitan Durham Medical Group states: “Most changes in the prostate are not due to cancer. African American males are high risk for prostate cancer. After age 40, I urge African American men to ask their doctor about appropriate tests to check for the disease”



Arnett Coleman, MD



What is the prostate? Prostate is a small gland found in the male reproductive system. It is about the size and shape of a walnut and sits low in the pelvis, below the bladder and just in front of the rectum.

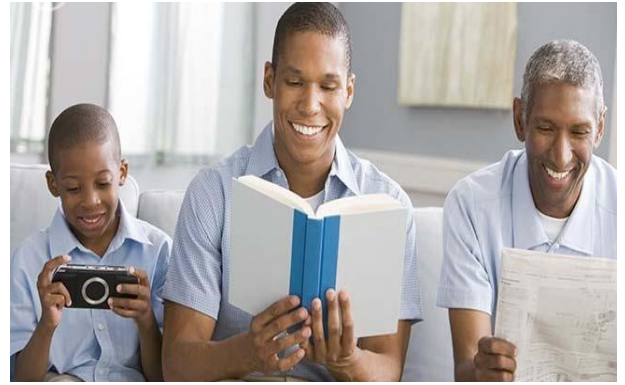
How does the prostate change as you get older?

The prostate gland surrounds the tube (urethra) that passes urine. As men age, the prostate tends to grow bigger and may squeeze the urethra. Be sure to tell your doctor if you experience any of the following urinary symptoms: **passing urine more during the day; having an urgent need to pass urine; burning when you pass urine; having less urine flow; and/or needing to get up many times during the night to urinate.**

What prostate changes should you be aware of?

Growing older raises your risk of prostate problems. Three (3) most common prostate changes or problems are: 1) Infection, 2) Enlarged Prostate and 3) Prostate Cancer.

One change does not lead to another. However, having an enlarged prostate raises your chance of prostate cancer. Men with a history of prostate cancer in the family are also more likely to develop the disease. Diet and lifestyle factors are also likely to have an effect as well.



Take the PSA Test or Not for Early Detection of Prostate Cancer?

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued a final recommendation against the routine use of the PSA test for the early detection of prostate cancer. Several organizations, like Prostate Health Education Network (PHEN) and prostate cancer specialists **stand firmly against this final recommendation and accept data showing that the PSA test saves lives and is the major contributor to a decline of 49% in the prostate cancer death rate since the test has been used.** With a death rate 140% higher than for other men, **Black men cannot simply ignore the killer within that is prostate cancer.** Source: African Americans Should Ignore the Recent PSA Test Recommendation Newsletter By: *Thomas A. Farrington, PHEN President & Founder May 23, 2012*

Most men with prostate cancer don't know they have it because it is a "silent" disease. It usually grows without symptoms or problems for months or years. **Ask your doctor if you should have the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and a digital rectal exam (DRE) test or not. However, it is recommended that prostate cancer screening should not be performed on men 75 years of age or older.**

For more information, please refer to the following:

www.cancer.gov

www.prostatecancerfoundation.org

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service 1.800.4.CANCER

American Cancer Society 1.800.ACS.2345 or www.cancer.org

www.prostatehealthed.org

A message from your Community Health Coalition, Inc., in association with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, NC Mutual Life Insurance Company, Central Carolina Black Nurses' council Inc., and Durham Regional Hospital.

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