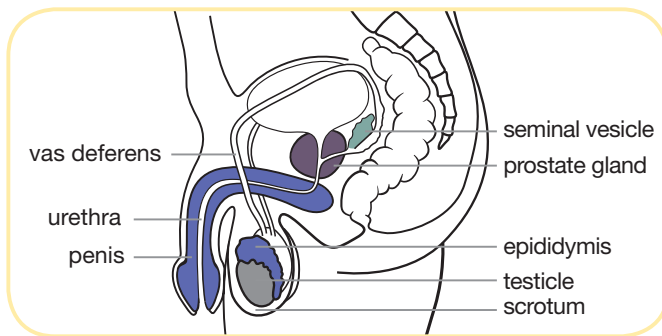




Prostate cancer is the most common cancer affecting Australian men (after non-melanoma skin cancer).



Prostate cancer is the growth of abnormal cells in the prostate gland. This gland is only found in males and is about the size of a walnut.

The causes of prostate cancer are not understood and there is currently no clear prevention strategy.

What is the chance of a diagnosis of prostate cancer?

Around 20,000 Australian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year. It affects mostly men in older age groups and is rare in men under 45 years of age.

The chance of developing prostate cancer is significantly higher in men who have a close relative with prostate cancer; the risks are higher if the relative was diagnosed before the age of 60. If you have a family history of prostate cancer, talk to your doctor.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

In its early stages, prostate cancer may not show any symptoms. Symptoms of early prostate cancer can include:

- difficulty passing urine
- a slow, interrupted flow of urine
- frequent passing of urine, including at night
- incontinence.

Symptoms associated with advanced prostate cancer include:

- blood in urine
- pain during urination
- lower back or pelvic pain.

These symptoms are also found in men who may have benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a common, non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland. If you experience these symptoms, visit your doctor.

How is prostate cancer detected?

There is no single, simple test to detect prostate cancer. Your doctor may do a rectal examination to feel your prostate.

Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) involves your doctor inserting a gloved finger into the rectum to feel the prostate gland. Some abnormality may be felt, but it is not possible to feel the entire prostate or a small cancer. A tumour that is out of reach of the finger may be missed.

The PSA test measures the level of PSA in your blood. It does not specifically test for cancer. Virtually all PSA is produced by the prostate gland. The normal range depends on your age. A PSA above the typical range may indicate the possibility of prostate cancer.

However, two thirds of cases of elevated PSA are due to non-cancerous conditions such as prostatitis and BPH. If either of these tests suggest an abnormality, other tests are necessary to confirm a diagnosis of prostate cancer, usually a trans-rectal ultrasound (TRUS) and biopsy.

Should I have a PSA test?

If you have no symptoms and are thinking about having a PSA test, you should ask your doctor about the risks and benefits.

It is important to balance the potential benefit of detecting a prostate cancer early against the risk that detection and treatment may not be necessary. Treatment may affect your lifestyle but it may also save your life.

Make your own decision about whether to be tested after a discussion with your doctor. Ensure you get good quality information to make an informed decision.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Where can I get reliable information?

Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia.

Cancer Council Australia website

(with links to state and territory Cancer Councils)

www.cancer.org.au

Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration

www.prostatehealth.org.au

Andrology Australia

www.andrologyaustralia.org