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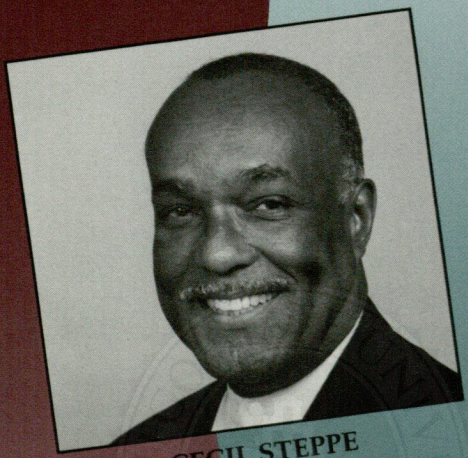
THE FACTS ABOUT PROSTATE CANCER



CECIL STEPPE
PROSTATE CANCER
SURVIVOR

Scripps

Stevens Cancer Center

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among American men. About 1 in every 11 men will develop the disease.

The Prostate Gland and Cancer

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland located just below the bladder in the male genital tract. The prostate produces fluid, which mixes with sperm from the testicles to form semen.

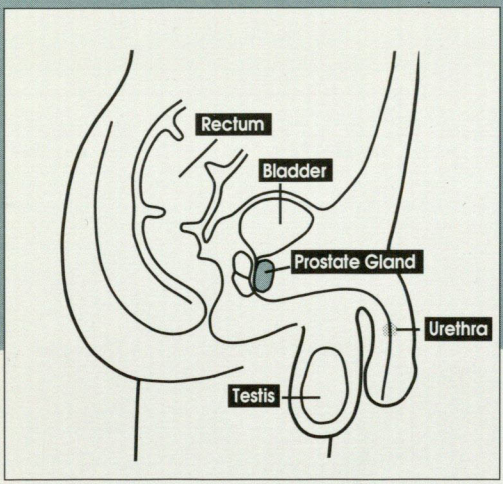
The cause of prostate cancer remains unknown. The majority of all cases are diagnosed in men over the age of 65. Black Americans have a rate of 1 in 9, the highest in the world. Some evidence shows that there may be an increased risk associated with family history as well as diets high in fat.

Symptoms of Prostate Cancer

Most often, prostate cancer has no symptoms, especially in the early stages. However, some general warning signs include:

- ❑ Difficulty with urination or inability to urinate
- ❑ Frequent urination, especially at night
- ❑ Weak or interrupted urine flow
- ❑ Pain or burning upon urination or ejaculation
- ❑ Presence of blood in urine
- ❑ Persistent pain in the lower back, hips, and upper thighs

These symptoms can also be caused by other conditions common in older men. However, it is important to seek your physician's advice if you experience ANY of these warning signs.



As men age, the prostate often enlarges. This condition, known as benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), affects more than half of the men over the age of 50. BPH and other conditions, such as infections and prostate stones, are NOT signs of cancer, but should be evaluated by your physician.

Early Detection

Early detection of prostate cancer is a key factor in survival. Over 80 percent of all men whose tumors are diagnosed at an early stage are alive five years after treatment. Men age 40 and over should receive a rectal examination and a PSA blood test as part of a regular annual checkup.

A digital rectal examination is a simple and effective way to detect any abnormalities. Your physician inserts a gloved finger into the rectum and feels the prostate through the rectal wall. If your physician detects any abnormalities, additional tests will be required, such as ultrasound, blood tests and a simple biopsy.

Treatment

If prostate cancer is confirmed, the most common treatments include surgery, radiation therapy and hormonal treatments. The type of treatment chosen depends on the extent of the disease, and on the patient's age, medical history, and overall health. Sometimes, a combination of procedures is required.

Remember, if you experience any symptoms of prostate cancer, contact your physician immediately.

If you do not have a physician, call the Scripps Memorial Hospitals Physician Referral Service at **1-800-SCRIPPS**. You will quickly receive the name and number of a physician who will help meet your needs.

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