



Prostate Cancer Prevention & Resource Guide

September 2026

The Maryland Department of Health's Center for Cancer Prevention and Control is sharing this guide with the local Cigarette Restitution Fund-Cancer Prevention, Education, Screening, and Treatment programs to assist in the development of prostate cancer awareness materials.

This guide provides information and materials from reputable sources including, but not limited to, the American Cancer Society (ACS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and George Washington University Cancer Institute. Resources include ready-made media such as fact sheets, social media messaging, and videos to help you create, update, and tailor health education materials for the communities you serve.



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Understanding Prostate Cancer

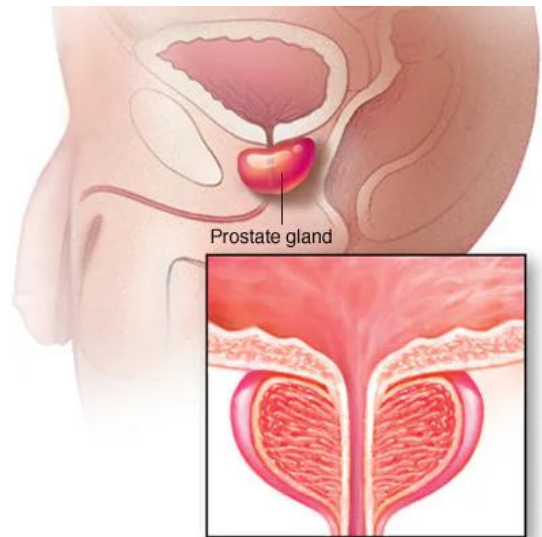
The prostate gland, found only in males, sits just below the bladder. It surrounds the top part of the tube that drains urine from the bladder, called the urethra. The prostate's main job is to make the fluid that nourishes and carries sperm, called seminal fluid. Prostate cancer occurs when one or more abnormal prostate cells start growing uncontrollably. These prostate cancer cells then form masses of abnormal cells known as tumors.

How common is prostate cancer?

About 1 in 8 men in the U.S. will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. This is about the same rate as breast cancer in women. For Black American men, the rate is 1 in 6. In 2026, about 333,830 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. and more than 1.4 million men are diagnosed each year worldwide.

What causes prostate cancer?

It's not very clear what causes prostate cancer. Health care professionals have found that there are certain things that may increase the risk of prostate cancer. This can include being Black/African American, older age, obese, or having a family history of prostate cancer. However, the exact cause of prostate cancer is often unknown. Importantly, prostate cancer is not caused by an enlarged prostate, or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), and having BPH does not mean that a man will develop prostate cancer.



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Sources

Mayo Clinic Staff. (2026). Prostate Cancer. *Mayo Clinic*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prostate-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20353087>

Prostate Cancer Foundation. (n.d.). Understanding Prostate Cancer. *Prostate Cancer Foundation*. <https://www.pcf.org/patient-support/understanding-prostate-cancer/>

What Are Symptoms of Prostate Cancer?

Early prostate cancer usually does not cause symptoms. While not common, symptoms of early prostate cancer may include:

- Problems urinating, such as a slow or weak urinary stream or the need to urinate more often, especially at night.
- Blood in the urine or semen.

Advanced prostate cancer means the cancer has grown larger and possibly spread to other areas. When prostate cancer is advanced, it can not only cause problems with urinating and blood in the urine or semen, but can also have other symptoms including:

- Trouble getting an erection (also known as erectile dysfunction or ED).
- Pain in the hips, back (spine), chest (ribs), or other areas if the cancer has spread to the bones.
- Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet, or loss of bladder or bowel control when the cancer has spread to the spine and is pressing on the spinal cord.
- Weight loss.
- Feeling very tired or fatigued.

It is important to note that most of these symptoms could be caused by something other than prostate cancer. Trouble urinating may not mean prostate cancer. Problems urinating is most often caused by BPH which is a non-cancerous growth of the prostate. However, it is important to tell your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms so that the cause can be found and treated.

Source

American Cancer Society Medical and Editorial Content Team. (2025). Signs and symptoms of Prostate Cancer. *American Cancer Society*.
<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/signs-symptoms.html>

What Are Risk Factors of Prostate Cancer?

Having a risk factor, or several, does not mean you will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Many people who have one or more risk factors never get cancer, while others may have had few or no known risk factors and still be diagnosed with cancer. Researchers have found that some factors can affect prostate cancer risk, such as:

1. Older Age
 - a. Prostate cancer is rare in men younger than 40, but the chance of having prostate cancer significantly increases after the age of 50. About 6 in 10 cases of prostate cancer are found in men older than 65 years.
2. Race/Ethnicity
 - a. Prostate cancer develops more often in Black/African American men and Caribbean men of African ancestry than in men of other races. Prostate cancer also tends to develop in these men at younger ages.
3. Family History
 - a. Prostate cancer may run in some families which suggests that there may be an inherited or genetic factor to prostate cancer. Having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles a man's risk of developing the disease. The risk is much higher for men who have several relatives who were diagnosed with prostate cancer, particularly if these relatives were young when diagnosed.
4. Inherited Gene Changes
 - a. Certain gene changes that are inherited from a parent can raise prostate cancer risk.
 - b. Inherited variants of BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, which are linked to an increased risk of breast cancer, ovarian, and other cancers in some families, can also increase prostate cancer risk in men, especially mutations in BRCA2.
 - c. Men with Lynch Syndrome (also known as hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer or HNPCC), a condition caused by inherited gene changes, are at increased risk for prostate cancer and other types of cancers.

Source

American Cancer Society Medical and Editorial Content Team. (2023). Prostate Cancer Risk Factors. *American Cancer Society*.
<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>

What Are Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Prostate Cancer?

There is no sure way to prevent prostate cancer, but there are things you can do that might help lower your risk of prostate cancer.

1. Improve your diet.
 - a. Reduce fat intake. Eat fewer trans fats (e.g., fried and buttered foods; donuts; pie crusts; packaged cookies, crackers, muffins, cakes; processed or pre-packaged foods) and saturated fats (e.g., butter, cheese, coconut, beef, lamb, pork, lard, ice cream). Focus on healthy fats such as omega-3 fatty acids from nuts, seeds, and fish.
 - b. Eat more fruit and vegetables. Incorporate a wide variety of produce, including leafy greens. The antioxidant lycopene, which you get plenty of in cooked or processed tomatoes, has been shown to slow the growth of prostate cancer cells. Vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower (cruciferous vegetables) contain something called sulforaphane that can help protect against cancer.
 - c. Avoid charred meat. Charred meat, from frying or grilling at high temperatures, may produce a chemical compound that leads to cancer.
2. Maintain a healthy weight.
 - a. While the effect of body weight is not completely clear, some studies found that men with excess body weight may have higher risk of developing more advanced or aggressive prostate cancer. In general, losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your risk of cancer and many other health problems.
3. Get regular exercise.
 - a. Exercise can reduce inflammation, improve immune function and help reverse negative effects of a sedentary lifestyle.
4. Stop smoking and drink less.
 - a. Quitting smoking can improve your health in many ways, including lowering your cancer risk. If you drink, do so in moderation.
5. Increase your Vitamin D.
 - a. Most people don't get enough Vitamin D. It can help protect against prostate cancer and other conditions. Vitamin D rich foods include cod liver oil, wild salmon, and dried shitake mushrooms.
6. Some medicines, often taken for other prostate problems, may help reduce the risk of prostate cancer.
 - a. Drugs called 5-alpha reductase inhibitors such as finasteride and dutasteride block the 5-alpha reductase enzyme which changes testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT) and is the main hormone that causes the prostate to grow.

Sources

American Cancer Society and Medical and Editorial Content Team. (2023). Can prostate cancer be prevented? *American Cancer Society*.

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/prevention.html>

Johns Hopkins Medicine. (n.d.). Prostate cancer: Prevention. *Johns Hopkins Medicine*. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/prostate-cancer/prostate-cancer-prevention>

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Importance of Shared-Decision Making

Shared-decision making is a collaborative process in which patients and health care providers work together to decide the best plan of care based on the patient's individual values, preferences, and goals. It involves providers sharing the best available evidence, explaining the potential benefits and risks of available options, and supporting patients to consider their choices. The goal is to help patients make an informed decision about whether it's best for them to be screened for prostate cancer.

Shared-decision making can be approached using a three-step model: choice talk, option talk, and decision talk.

- Choice talk introduces the choice. *Example: Provider explains to the patient what the prostate-specific antigen (a protein made by cells in the prostate gland, also known as PSA) screening is and that it is an option for screening.*
- Option talk describes the options and illustrates the choices and possible action steps for the patient. *Example: Provider informs the patient about screening options in detail such as what could occur after a positive or negative PSA screening test.*
- Decision talk helps patients explore their preference and decide about whether screening is right for them. *Example: Patients are encouraged to explore and define their preferences and risk tolerance.*

Shared-decision making occurs in a step-by-step process and a treatment decision is based on many factors. Providers must:

- Ask for patient input.
- Provide an unbiased list of options, including pros and cons.
- Understand the patient's values and preferences.
- Decide with the patient on the best choice.
- Continue open communication with the patient to determine if the best decision was made.

Successful shared decision making is interactive, happens in real-time, is a mutual sharing of information, and gives patients the time and space to understand and weigh all available options. Sometimes, if appropriate, family members may be present and included in the conversations.

Sources

The American Cancer Society Medical and Editorial Content Team. (2023). Screening Tests for Prostate Cancer. *American Cancer Society*. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/tests.html>

Pekala, K, et al. (2025). Shared decision-making before prostate cancer screening decision. *Nature Reviews Urology*, (21)6, 329-338. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11250989/>
Zero Prostate Cancer. (n.d.). One pager: Ask the doctor series – Shared decision making (PDF). *Zero Prostate Cancer*. <https://zerocancer.org/educational-materials/ask-doctor-shared-decision-making-pdf>

Ready-Made Media

American Cancer Society – Can Prostate Cancer Testing Benefit You?

- This 2-page handout provides a decision aid to help men understand prostate cancer screening options and make an informed choice with their health care provider. It discusses the potential benefits and risks of PSA testing, including possible screening outcomes, follow-up procedures, and treatment considerations.
 - <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/cancer-control/en/booklets-flyers/prostate-cancer-sdm-aid.pdf>

American Cancer Society – Testing for Prostate Cancer

- This 12-page booklet provides information about prostate cancer testing, including the PSA blood test and other factors to consider when deciding whether screening is right for you. It explains the potential benefits, limitations, and risks of testing and encourages individuals to discuss their options with their health care provider.
 - <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/cancer-control/en/booklets-flyers/testing-for-prostate-cancer-handout.pdf>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Facts About Prostate Cancer

- This 2-page handout provides information about prostate cancer, including common symptoms, risk factors, screening options, and potential benefits and harms of screening. It encourages men to talk with their healthcare provider about their individual risk and make an informed decision about prostate cancer screening.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/prostate-cancer/media/pdf/prostate-cancer-fact-sheet-general-508.pdf>

George Washington Cancer Center – Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign

- This toolkit provides information on prostate cancer such as data and statistics, best practices for communicating about prostate cancer, tips on how to communicate with diverse audiences, social media messaging and graphics, and additional resources.
 - <https://cancercontroltap.org/news/prostate-cancer-awareness-campaign/>

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force – Is Prostate Cancer Screening Right for You?

- This flyer discusses prostate cancer screening and the PSA blood test, including the potential benefits and risks of screening. It provides information to help men ages 55-69 make an informed decision about whether prostate cancer screening is right for them.

- <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Home/GetFileByToken/HV9RGq3wLyh6PyK4oxVtde>

Zero Prostate Cancer – “Ask the Doctor” series

- These 1-pagers discuss how doctors can empower patients with clear communication and information sharing, how biomarkers and family history help identify individuals with a higher risk of prostate cancer, how prostate cancer survivors can maximize their quality of life, and how genetic testing can help some men learn more about their risk.
 - Shared Decision Making: <https://zerocancer.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Ask%20the%20Doctor%20One-Pager%20-%20Shared%20Decision%20Making%20FINAL%202023.pdf>
 - Biomarkers & Family History: <https://zerocancer.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Ask%20the%20Doctor%20One-Pager%20-%20Prostate%20Cancer%20Biomarkers%20and%20Family%20History%20FINAL%202023.pdf>
 - Living with Prostate Cancer: <https://zerocancer.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Ask%20the%20Doctor%20One-Pager%20-%20Living%20with%20Prostate%20Cancer%20FINAL%202023.pdf>
 - Screening for High-Risk Individuals: <https://zerocancer.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Ask%20the%20Doctor%20One-Pager%20-%20Prostate%20Cancer%20Screening%20For%20High-Risk%20Men%20FINAL%202023.pdf>

Videos

American Cancer Society – Prostate Cancer: Informed Decision

- This 6-minute video discusses informed decision-making options for prostate cancer.
 - https://youtu.be/Vg9iBOzlo38?si=W5HU9P_iLiKf4FEP

American Cancer Society – Prostate Cancer Video for Clinicians

- This 7-minute video for clinicians discusses informed decision-making information on prostate cancer that can be relayed to patients.
 - https://youtu.be/_Zl4Fqxio8?si=TjhRNP8VHfux1vsp

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Should I Get Tested for Prostate Cancer?

- This 2.5-minute video discusses the importance of men talking about screening with their doctor. This video helps men understand their prostate cancer screening options.
 - https://youtu.be/gUSLqrEiRI4?si=-JYcUBOx1_hhpOwR

National Cancer Institute – Did You Know?

- This 4-minute video looks at prostate cancer in the United States and highlights key topics and statistical trends.
 - <https://youtu.be/CLYEYSDENVA?si=ndHQmMTDZFgegdi>

Contact Page

Please note that not all cancer screening messages contained in the web resources provided are consistent with the Prostate Cancer Minimal Clinical Elements. If you choose to use information for these web resources, we encourage you to carefully check materials for consistency with the guidance we have provided.

Please contact Tony Rodriguez, Health Educator at the Center for Cancer Prevention and Control, at Anthony.Rodriguez@maryland.gov if you have any questions.



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