

# Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

## September 2012

Palm Beach County  
Employee Benefits Fund

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and there is no better time for men to discuss with their health care providers their concerns about this disease. Men can make informed decisions about maintaining their prostate health. Statistical data from the Men's Health Network and the American Cancer Society indicate the following:

- Over 230,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer
- 30,000 will die of prostate cancer every year
- 1 man in 6 will get prostate cancer during his lifetime
- 1 man in 34 will die of the disease
- Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men but if the cancer is detected early, it boasts some of the highest survival rates (detection in the earliest stages boasts a 5-year survival rate is close to 100%)
- African-American men are disproportionately affected by prostate cancer, having higher rates of prostate cancer diagnosis and death than men of all other racial or ethnic groups in the United States
- Almost one third of prostate cancer cases are found in men during their prime year at work.
- Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in men

The fact remains that many men do not know what their prostate is or what its physiological function is, yet more than 30 million men suffer from prostate conditions that negatively affect their quality of life.

The prostate is a gland found below a man's bladder that produces fluid for semen. Issues with the gland can affect men of all ages -

- For men under the age of 50, the most common prostate issue is prostatitis.
- For men over the age of 50, the most common prostate problem is prostate enlargement otherwise known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).
- Older men are at risk for prostate cancer.

## Prostatitis

Prostatitis is the inflammation of the prostate gland. Symptoms may include a burning feeling during urination or frequent urination. Fever and tiredness may accompany these symptoms. Some kinds of prostatitis are caused by disease causing bacteria. The urine will then be tested and antibiotic therapy would be the course of treatment. If bacteria are not found in the urine, the doctor will look for other causes such as a kidney stone or cancer. If no other causes are found, the doctor may decide on a diagnosis called nonbacterial prostatitis. Working with the doctor to find the proper treatment for prostatitis is the key. Sometimes changing the diet, taking warm baths and medicines can help ease the situation ([www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov)).



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## Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)

BPH is a normal part of the aging process in men due to changes in hormone balance and cell growth. It is not cancer and it does not cause cancer, however men with prostate cancer can also have BPH. BPH is usually not a serious problem, but it can be a nuisance for men. As the prostate enlarges, it can squeeze into the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body). Pressure from the enlarged prostate may affect bladder control ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)). BPH can lead to serious problems such as urinary tract infections. If not treated quickly or properly, constant urination problems can lead to kidney damage.

The symptoms of BPH include:

- trouble getting a urine stream started or a weak urine stream;
- a frequent urination sensation - this may even cause a man to wake up during the night; and
- a sense that the bladder is not completely empty after urination and therefore, the urine stream has not completely stopped.

With any of these symptoms, it is always recommended that a doctor evaluate each situation to make a proper diagnosis.

Tests that the doctor may order (from [www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov))

Tests	Rationale
Digital rectal exam	This exam gives the doctor a general idea of the size and condition of the prostate
Blood test	This test will identify the prostate-specific antigen (PSA). If the PSA is high, it may be a sign of prostate cancer. Note: men can have high PSA scores but may not have prostate cancer.
Imaging	The doctor will use x-rays or a sonogram. An intravenous pyelogram is an x-ray of the urinary tract. Dye is injected into a vein. Once the dye is excreted in the urine, the dye will be visual thru an x-ray.  A rectal sonogram uses a probe that is inserted into the rectum to bounce sound waves off the prostate.
Urine flow study	A special device is used to measure how quickly the urine is flowing.
Cytoscopy	A thin tube with lenses (cystoscope) is inserted into the bladder through the urethra while the doctor looks through the cytoscope.



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BPH is treated by several different methods and each man should work with his doctor to find the best individual treatment. There are many different types of medicines available to help shrink or relax the prostate as well nonsurgical procedures that can be performed. Surgical treatment may include removal of a piece of the prostate. If the prostate is especially large, the most common surgery performed is transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP). This surgical procedure requires general anesthesia and a hospital stay.

## Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is a malignant tumor that begins in the outer part of the prostate. As the tumor grows, it may spread to the inner part of the prostate. The prostate can be removed completely to stop the cancer; however there is a high probability of long-lasting sexual and bladder control problems ([www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov)). It is very important for a man who has prostate cancer to discuss all his options for treatment during his diagnosis and after any procedures or techniques that have been performed to stop the cancer.

## Prostate Health Month: Raising Awareness of Prostate Health among American Men ([www.usrf.org/prostate.html#awareness](http://www.usrf.org/prostate.html#awareness))

“Bringing together current educational efforts on Prostate Cancer and BPH education, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month is supported by nationwide public service announcements reaching an American audience via television, radio, and print. The public service announcement encourages men to become educated about prostate health and to take action if they experience prostate problems. Further, the public service announcements also include a montage of men from various backgrounds and professions – emphasizing the importance of prostate health to all men.”

## The American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org))

“The American Cancer Society recommends that men have the opportunity to make an informed decision with their health care provider about screening for prostate cancer after receiving information about the uncertainties, risks, and potential benefits associated with screening. Men at average should start talking to their doctors beginning at age 50. Men at higher risk, should talk to their doctor about prostate testing earlier, including African Americans, at age 45, and men who have had a first-degree relative diagnosed with prostate cancer, at age 40. For both men at average risk and higher risk, information should be provided about what is known and what is uncertain about the benefits and limitations of early detection tests and treatments so they can make informed decisions about testing.”



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## How coaches can help members learn more about prostate cancer

Coaches work with members to review their Clinical Health Risk Assessment (CHRA). The CHRA can provide valuable information regarding future disease risks associated with the member's lifestyle based on personal information they give during the completion of the assessment.

Coaches can also remind members of the importance of having annual wellness checkups and to discuss health concerns with their medical health providers. Men of all ages should be encouraged to visit with their medical health provider and give detailed family health information such as family history of cancer.

Coaches can engage their members to take control of their health for the better through wellness and healthy lifestyle education. Members with chronic conditions can learn to better manage these conditions and coaches can promote a greater understanding of treatment options and better use of health resources.

### Resources

Prostate Cancer Foundation – <http://www.pcf.org>

National Cancer Institute - <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/prostate>

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases  
Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC)  
[http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/prostate\\_ez/](http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/prostate_ez/)

Medline Plus - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prostatecancer.html>

The American Cancer Society – <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/prostatecancer/index>

Centers for Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/>

Us Too International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network -  
<http://www.ustoo.org/>

Urological Science Research Foundation - <http://www.usrf.org/index.shtml>



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