

Saving Kidneys 9



Benign Prostate Disease

This booklet will tell you more about the prostate gland. Its functions and benign hyperplasia have been defined in a simple way. Ways to prevent and treat this condition have also been described.

Kidneys are two bean-shaped organs, situated behind the stomach on either side of the vertebral column. Each kidney is capable of sustaining life independently. In other words, a person can have normal life even with one kidney. Kidneys are a part of the urinary system. The urinary system consists of the kidneys, ureters, urinary bladder and the urethra.

The kidneys remove wastes and extra water from the blood to form urine. If these wastes are not removed they can be harmful to the body. They perform other important functions also.

In addition to removing wastes, kidneys release hormone Erythropoietin, release hormone Renin, release active form of vitamin D, and help in balancing the body fluid by maintaining the right amount of water in the body.

Benign Prostate Disease

The prostate gland is about the size of a walnut and is located below the bladder, the organ that stores urine. The prostate gland is part of the reproductive system in men. The job of the prostate gland is to make fluid for semen, which is used to carry sperm during ejaculation.

Why does the prostate gland cause problems?

If the prostate gland becomes enlarged, it can interfere with the flow of urine. The prostate gland wraps around the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the tip of the penis. As the prostate enlarges, it squeezes the part of the urethra that runs through it, and this may cause difficulty in urinating.

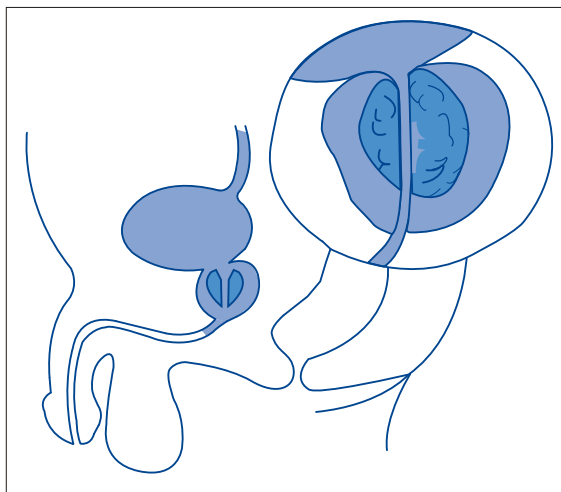
How common are prostate problems?

More than half of men over the age of 60 have enlarged prostates. As men age, the chances that their prostate will become enlarged increases. Only about half of these men have any symptoms due to their prostate.

What are the symptoms of a prostate problem?

The most common symptoms of urinary problems from the prostate are:

- a weak urinary stream
- a sense of not being able to empty the bladder completely



trouble starting urination urinating more often or a sense of urgency

having to get up often at night to urinate

intermittent urine stream

How is a prostate problem diagnosed?

A prostate problem is most often diagnosed because of the symptoms that it causes. Doctor will do a physical examination to see your prostate gland.

Does an enlarged prostate mean cancer?

Most men who have a prostate problem do not have cancer. Cancer does occur in the prostate gland and is more common as men age. The doctor can do a rectal examination to feel whether the prostate gland is enlarged or has lumps or areas that do not feel normal. In addition, there is now a blood test called the PSA, or prostate specific antigen test, which measures a substance that increases in the blood when prostate cancer has spread. A yearly prostate examination for all men over age 50 is to be done. However, men who have a family history of the disease, are advised to begin yearly prostate examination at age 40.

What other tests are used for prostate problems?

Other tests can be done to measure the urine flow, which can help the doctor decide how much the prostate is blocking the urine stream. The amount of urine left in the bladder after urinating can also be measured and this can sometimes be helpful. Other tests, such as ultrasound, can also give information about the prostate gland.

When does a prostate problem need treatment?

Enlarged prostate, or BPH, requires treatment only if the symptoms are severe enough to be troublesome to the patient, if the function of the urinary tract is seriously affected or if there are other complications, such as bleeding, kidney infections or kidney damage. An enlarged prostate by itself is not enough reason to need treatment.

What treatments are used for an enlarged prostate?

A number of treatments are available for an enlarged prostate that is causing urine problems. If you are not bothered by your symptoms, your doctor may choose to watch the condition for a period of time during which you will be examined one or more times a year to make certain that you are not developing complications. If more active treatment is needed, some of the following may be used:

Medicine: Two types of medicines are now in use to treat prostate enlargement. A medicine that is normally used for high blood pressure (alpha blockers) helps to relax the muscle tissue in the prostate, relieving part of the blockage. The second type of medicine used shrinks the enlarged prostate by blocking the effect on the prostate of the male hormone, testosterone. These medicines are helpful to some of the men who have enlarged prostates.

Surgery: This is currently the most widely accepted method of treating enlarged prostate when symptoms are severe. Basically, the operation removes some of the enlarged tissue to relieve the symptoms. More limited types of surgery are also done, which just make cuts in the prostate instead of removing tissue. New

forms of therapy including laser therapy are being developed. While these types of surgery help most patients, they may not eliminate the symptoms entirely.

Your doctor will advise you about what treatment is best for you.

Does surgery on the prostate gland interfere with sexual function?

Surgery for an enlarged prostate does not usually interfere with a man's sexual functioning. However, about 10 to 15 percent of men may have trouble getting erections after surgery. Men may have a problem called retrograde ejaculation, which causes semen to go backward into the bladder instead of through the urethra to the outside. This means no longer being able to father children but causes no other harm.

Who should I see if I have a prostate problem?

You should first see your regular doctor for this problem. Your doctor may refer you to a special doctor called a urologist for further evaluation and treatment. Urologists have additional training in treating problems of the urinary tract. Prostate gland problems are the most common disorders treated by urologists.

How does prostate problems cause damage to the kidneys ?

If we ignore early symptoms of prostate problem, it may slowly start obstructing the flow of urine. At a very late stage, the flow could be totally blocked. This will push the urine back towards the kidneys. If at this stage the problem is not rectified, the kidney can be damaged because of the reflux of urine.

Points to remember

Benign Prostate enlargement is not a disease. It is a natural response of our body to ageing.

70% of prostate problems can be cured by medicine alone.

Enlarged prostate does not necessarily mean cancer.

Prostate surgery does not usually interfere with man's sexual functioning.

Key words:

Prostate, Prostate Cancer

Please also refer the following information booklets from India Renal Foundation for more information.

1. Choosing Your Treatment
2. Haemodialysis
3. Peritoneal Dialysis
4. Transplantation
5. Diabetes & Kidney Failure
6. High Blood Pressure & Kidney Failure
7. Kidney Failure & Anaemia
8. Kidney Stones & Kidney Failure
9. Prostate Cancer
10. Urinary Tract Infection
11. Polycystic Kidney Disease



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