

***“Every human being is the author of his own health or disease”.***

*Hindu Prince Gautama Siddharta, the founder of Buddhism)*

**This month we focus on:**

# CANSA Men's Awareness Month



## *Note from the* **doctor**

**Although Prostate cancer is a real risk to Mens health, it is not the biggest risk. In South Africa the risks are**

1. **Unsafe sex / STIs** 26.3%
2. **High blood pressure** 9.0%
3. **Tobacco smoking** 8.5%
4. **Tuberculosis** 5.5%
5. **High BMI (excess body weight)** 7.0%

Besides tuberculosis all other conditions are preventable. The theme this month is prostate cancer, the article is very informative. All men over 40 should go to the doctor for a prostate check-up. The disease is easily detectable and relatively easily treatable, most men die with their prostate cancer, not from it.

I am more concerned about all the other risks men are exposed to that are preventable, more men die from those risks!

November, or more popularly, 'Movember' is Men's Health Awareness month, which particularly focuses on cancer in men awareness and the reduction thereof.

Two cancers particular to men, which need to be voiced across the globe include testicular and prostate cancer. In our November newsletter, we'll be addressing these two types of cancers in the hope that you will realise how important screening and early detection is!

*Dr. RB Malkin*

# Prostate Cancer

Did you know? The lifetime risk for Prostate Cancer in men in South Africa is 1 in 26, according to the 2009 National Cancer Registry.

## WHAT IS THE PROSTATE?

The prostate gland makes fluid that forms part of semen. The prostate lies just below the bladder in front of the rectum. It surrounds the urethra (the tube that carries urine and semen through the penis and out of the body).

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR PROSTATE CANCER?

A risk factor is anything that makes your chances higher for getting a disease such as cancer. Of course, different cancers have different risk factors and some risk factors, such as smoking can be changed/ controlled, while others such as age cannot be changed/ controlled. We've highlighted a few factors that may affect a man's risk of getting prostate cancer as the exact causes are still unknown.

### 1. Age

Prostate cancer is very rare in men younger than 40, but the chance of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50. About 6 in 10 cases of prostate cancer are found in men over the age of 65.

### 2. Race/ethnicity

Prostate cancer occurs more often in African men of African ancestry than in men of other races. African men are also more than twice as likely to die of prostate cancer as white men. The reasons for these racial and ethnic differences are not clear.

### 3. Family history

Prostate cancer seems to run in some families, which suggests that in some cases there may be an inherited or genetic factor. Having a father or brother with prostate cancer more than doubles a man's risk of developing this disease. (The risk is higher for men who have a brother with the disease than for those with an affected father.) The risk is much higher for men with several affected relatives, particularly if their relatives were young when the cancer was found.

### 4. Diet

The exact role of diet in prostate cancer is not clear, but several factors have been studied. Men who eat a lot of red meat or high-fat dairy products appear to have a slightly higher chance of getting prostate cancer. These men also tend to eat fewer fruits and vegetables. Doctors aren't sure which of these factors is responsible for raising the risk.

Some studies have suggested that men who consume a lot of calcium (through food or supplements) may have a higher risk of developing prostate cancer. Dairy foods (which are often high in calcium) might also increase risk. But most studies have not found such a link with the levels of calcium found in the average diet, and it's important to note that calcium is known to have other important health benefits.

### 5. Obesity

Most studies have not found that being obese (very overweight) is linked with a higher overall risk of getting prostate cancer.

Some studies have found that obese men have a lower risk of getting a low-grade (less dangerous) form of the disease, but a higher risk of getting more aggressive prostate cancer. The reasons for this are not clear.

### 6. Smoking

Most studies have not found a link between smoking and prostate cancer risk. Some research has linked smoking to a possible small increase in the risk of death from prostate cancer, but this finding will need to be confirmed.

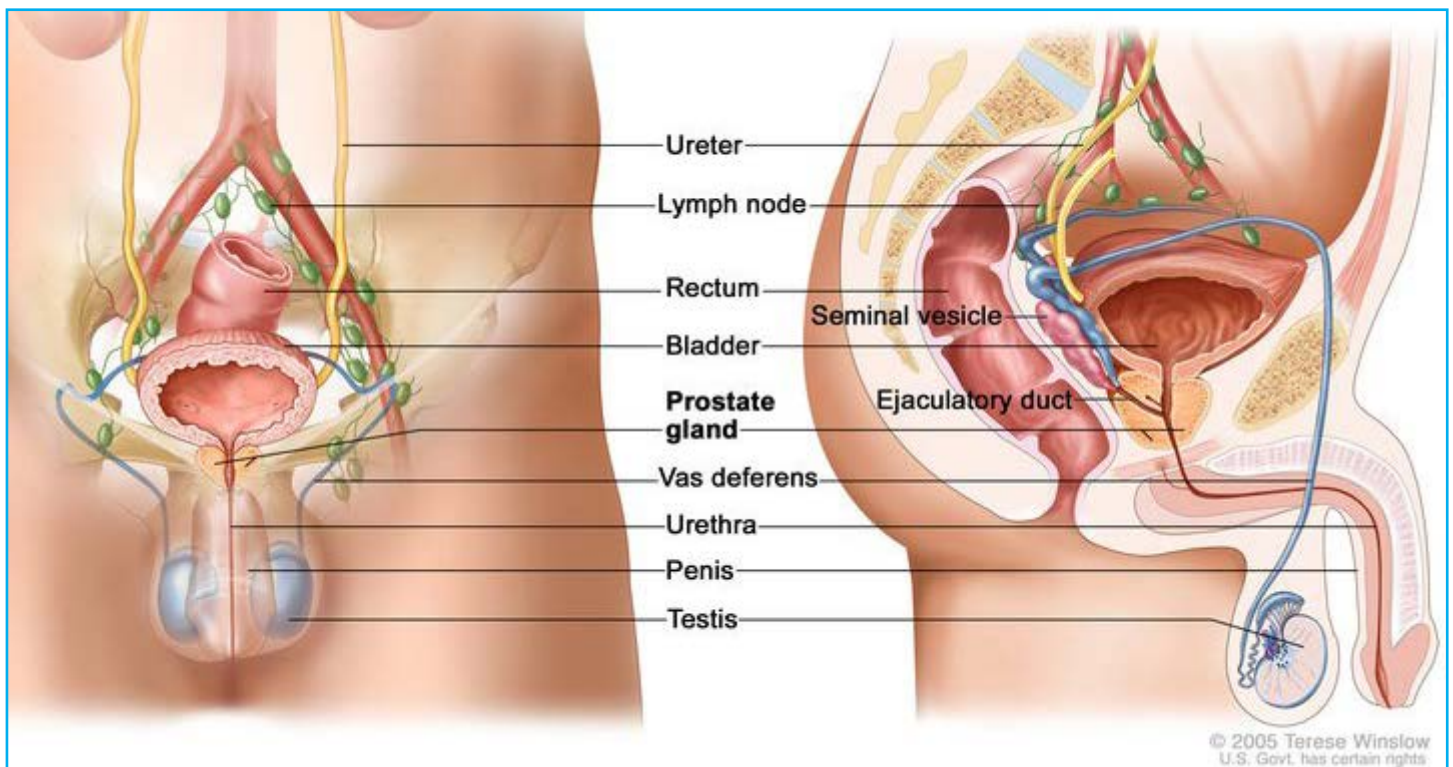
### 7. Workplace exposures

There is some evidence that firefighters are exposed to substances (toxic combustion products) that may increase their risk of prostate cancer.

**NOTE: It is important for men aged 40 years and older to go for simple screening tests each year to detect prostate cancer. Screening is the only tool which results in early detection, enabling more effective treatment and a better chance of recovery.**

## Two tests are commonly used to screen for prostate cancer:

- 1. Digital rectal exam (DRE):** A doctor or nurse inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to estimate the size of the prostate and feel for lumps or other abnormalities.
- 2. Prostate specific antigen (PSA) test:** Measures the level of PSA in the blood. (This is a rapid finger prick test). PSA is a substance made by the prostate. The levels of PSA in the blood can be higher in men who have prostate cancer. The PSA level may also be elevated in other conditions that affect the prostate.



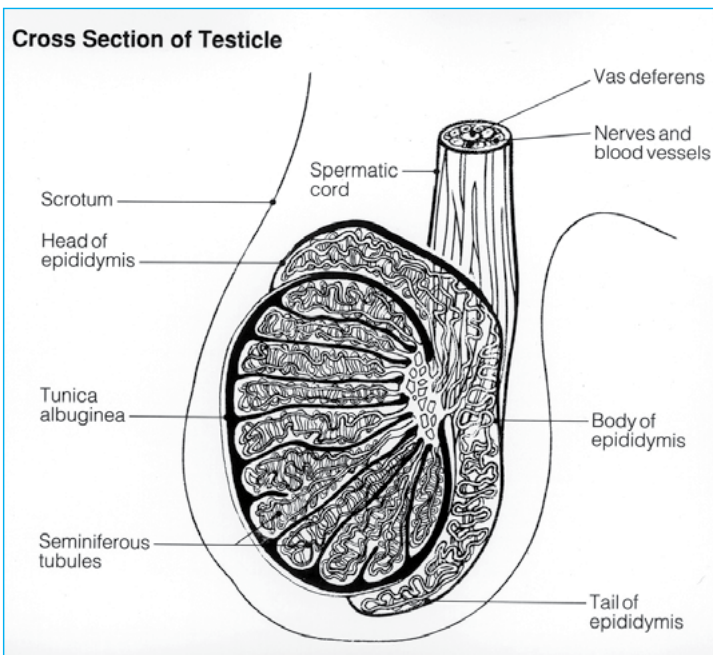
# Testicular Cancer

Did you know? The lifetime risk for Testicular Cancer in men in South Africa, is 1 in 2 399, according to the 2009 National Cancer Registry.

## WHAT IS TESTICULAR CANCER?

Cancer that starts in the testicles is called testicular cancer. To understand this cancer, it helps to know about the normal structure and function of the testicles.

Testicles (also called the testes; a single testicle is called a testis) are part of the male reproductive system. These 2 organs are each normally a little smaller than golf ball in adult males and are contained within a sac of skin called the scrotum. The scrotum hangs beneath the base of the penis.



### Testicles have 2 main functions:

- They make male hormones (androgens) such as testosterone.
- They make sperm, the male cells needed to fertilize a female egg cell to start a pregnancy.

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS OF DEVELOPING TESTICULAR CANCER?

### 1. An undescended testicle (cryptorchidism)

The testes form in the abdominal area during fetal development and usually descend into the scrotum before birth. Men who have a testicle that never descended are at greater risk of testicular cancer in either testicle than are men whose testicles descended normally. The risk remains elevated even if the testicle has been surgically relocated to the scrotum.

Still, the majority of men who develop testicular cancer don't have a history of undescended testicles.

### 2. Family history

If family members have had testicular cancer, you may have an increased risk.

### 3. Age

Testicular cancer affects teens and younger men, particularly those between ages 15 and 35. However, it can occur at any age.

### 4. Race

Testicular cancer is more common in white men than in black men.

### 5. HIV infection

Some evidence has shown that men infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), particularly those with AIDS, are at increased risk. No other infections have been shown to increase testicular cancer risk.

### What tests are used to detect testicular cancer?

Testicular self-examination (TSE) needs to be conducted by men at least once a month. Many TSE first discover testicular cancer as a painless lump or a swelling.

Testicular self-examination (TSE) is done to familiarize a man with the normal size, shape, and weight of his testicles and the area around the scrotum. This allows him to detect any changes from normal.

### Self-examination steps:

## JUST FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

**1** Check one testicle at a time.



**2** Hold the testicle between your thumbs and fingers of both hands and roll it gently between your fingers.



**3** If you notice any of these symptoms...

- hard lumps
- smooth or rounded bumps
- changes in size, shape, or consistency

...see a urologist right away.



Most Testicular Cancers can be detected early – a lump or swelling may be the first sign that a medical practitioner should be consulted.

Note! It's important for young men to start testicular self-examinations soon after puberty. Men from the age 15 to 40 years need to examine their testicles each month, preferably after a bath or shower, to feel for any pea-sized lumps that could indicate Testicular Cancer