



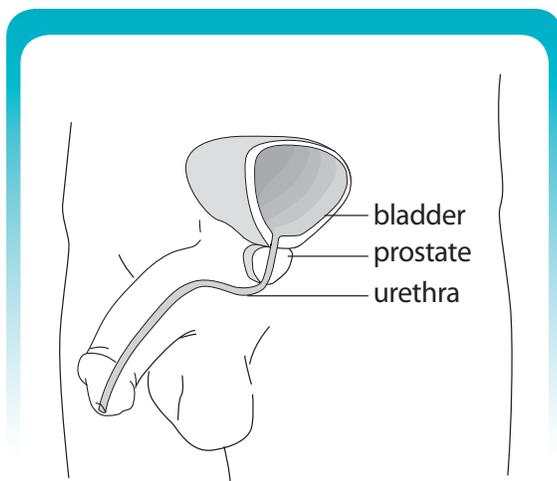
Prostatitis

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Prostatitis is a condition consisting of pelvic and/or genital pain or discomfort that may also include urinary and sexual problems. It is usually, but not always, associated with prostate inflammation or infection.

It is not uncommon in men of any age, although it occurs most frequently in young adults and middle-aged men. While it may be frustrating to live with prostate and pelvic discomfort, it is rarely an indication of a dangerous health problem. Prostatitis does not increase your risk of prostate cancer.

The prostate is a small gland about the size and shape of a chestnut. It is situated just below the bladder and surrounds the urethra, the passageway that carries urine from the bladder through the penis during urination. The prostate secretes fluid, which forms part of the semen in which sperm are transported.



Prostatitis can be caused by bacterial infections, by inflammation, or by nearby muscle and nerve dysfunction. Symptoms of prostatitis include pain or discomfort, urinary symptoms (burning with urination, more frequent urination), and sexual symptoms (pain with ejaculation, new onset of rapid ejaculation).

Acute prostatitis

Acute prostatitis is caused by a bacterial infection, usually E. Coli. This is associated with high fever, abdominal or pelvic pain, nausea, and the inability to urinate. You can become very sick with acute prostatitis and you should see your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

Investigations

The diagnosis of acute prostatitis can be made based on a man's symptoms and his physical examination. Digital rectal examination usually demonstrates an exquisitely tender prostate. Urine and blood tests for bacterial infection are performed.

Treatment

Intravenous antibiotics are usually required to eradicate the bacteria, followed by oral antibiotics. As well, pain killers and intravenous fluids help to resolve symptoms. If you are unable to urinate, a catheter will be passed into the bladder to help drain the bladder. If you are very sick, you may need admission to the hospital until the infection clears.

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Prostatitis

Chronic bacterial prostatitis

Low grade infection and inflammation involving the prostate can persist for longer periods of time and become chronic. Chronic bacterial prostatitis is a low grade infection with inflammation that can cause pelvic pain, and urinary and sexual symptoms. It can be associated with recurrent urinary tract infections. Prostatitis does not increase your risk of prostate cancer.

Investigations

Urine tests may be sent for bacterial culture to ensure that this is not a bladder infection. Sometimes your doctor will do a special urine test after a rigorous prostate exam. Prostate massage can help expel prostate secretions into the urethra (tube through which you pass urine). After the prostate massage, urinating will transport the prostate fluid with the urine sample. This sample can be examined for bacterial as well as for signs of inflammation.

Treatment

The treatment of chronic bacteria is six to twelve weeks of specific types of antibiotics. Only certain antibiotics are able to penetrate into the prostate. Unfortunately you need to be on antibiotics for a long period of time to allow them to get to the prostate. Even with treatment, it can take even longer for the symptoms to resolve. Symptoms tend to improve even after finishing the full course of antibiotics.

Chronic pelvic pain syndrome

Chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CPPS) is NOT caused by bacteria. This is chronic inflammation of the prostate that can cause similar symptoms to

chronic bacterial prostatitis. These symptoms may be intermittent. Many may have already been treated with a long course of antibiotics without full resolution of their symptoms. These symptoms can be very frustrating to men who have lived with these symptoms for months or even years. This is not a sign of anything ominous like prostate cancer. Urine tests and prostate massage tests do not show signs of bacteria, but may show inflammation. The symptoms may be due to spasms and inflammation of the pelvic muscles around the inflamed prostate.

Treatment

In the absence of proven infection, prolonged or repeated courses of antibiotics are seldom helpful. Treatment may include anti-inflammatories and pain killers when the discomfort presents. Medications to relax the prostate muscles can help with urinary symptoms in some men. Physiotherapy for the pelvic muscles can also be helpful. Occasionally your doctor will recommend repeated prostate massage to help expel the inflammation and help with the muscle spasms around the prostate. Ejaculation can sometimes help with the discomfort, while others may experience exacerbation of their symptoms. It is best for you to determine how ejaculation affects your symptoms. A change in diet (avoiding spicy food, acidic food/drink, and or alcohol), exercise, local heat therapy (hot water bottle or heating pad) or use of a "donut" cushion may be helpful in controlling symptoms.

Although the symptoms can be very frustrating and inconvenient, the symptoms are rarely a sign of a dangerous health problem. Over time, the symptoms tend to decrease in both intensity and frequency. The symptoms can resolve completely, but often this can take years. Speak to your physician about other ways to help you cope with your symptoms.

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