



Prostatitis – A straight forward guide to inflammation of the prostate and Pelvic Pain Syndrome

What is the prostate?

Only men have a prostate and it is usually about the size of a walnut. Around the age of 40 it starts to grow or enlarge and this may cause problems for a man when passing urine or not being able to pass urine.

Where is it?

The prostate is inside the pelvis, just below the bladder and in front of the back passage. It wraps around the tube that allows urine to flow out of the bladder and for semen to pass out through the penis.

What does the prostate do?

It supplies the fluid to protect and nourish sperm during intercourse.

One of the proteins made in the prostate is Prostate Specific Antigen, or PSA. Some PSA leaks out into the blood and may be measured. This is called your PSA level.

What is prostatitis? (prost-a-ty-tis)

Prostatitis means that you have inflammation or infection in your prostate. In fact, almost 1 in 2 men, between 18 and 50, will have at least one episode of prostatitis in their lifetime.

Some common signs are:

- Chills, body aches and feeling unwell
- Fever
- Pain in the lower back or genital area or penis or inner thighs or testicles
- Pain during or after ejaculation
- Difficulty or pain when passing urine
- Needing to pass urine more frequently, in a greater hurry and more often during the night
- Not being able to empty the bladder completely
- Lack of interest in having intercourse

There are 4 types of prostatitis.

Acute bacterial prostatitis

This is least common. It is caused by a bacterial infection (germs). Symptoms occur suddenly and can be very severe causing a lot of pain. It is important to see your doctor quickly.

Treatment:

It may mean a hospital stay and having antibiotics in a drip.

Chronic bacterial prostatitis

This is not common. It is caused by a bacterial infection (germs). Symptoms are not as severe and tend to develop gradually or may come and go.

Treatment:

Antibiotics for between 4 – 12 weeks.

Chronic pelvic pain syndrome

This is the most common type but exactly what causes it isn't known. Symptoms can be there for a long time, go away and then suddenly return without warning.

Treatment:

The best type of treatment for each man may take some time to find as no single solution works for everyone.

Your doctor may try:

- Antibiotics for 4 - 6 weeks
- Non steroid, anti-inflammatory tablets to fight inflammation
- Pills called alpha blockers to relax muscle tightness or spasms
- Prostate massage
- Referring you to a physiotherapist or pain specialist

Asymptomatic inflammatory prostatitis

This is usually found when the man is having tests for other conditions. As it doesn't cause any symptoms no treatment is necessary.

Tests and Examinations

Urine sample

You will be asked for a sample of urine so this can be tested for infection.

Digital Rectal Examination (DRE)

Because the prostate cannot be seen or checked from outside the body, one of the first examinations the doctor will do is a DRE.

The doctor puts a gloved finger into the back passage to feel the shape, size and condition of the prostate. This is a straight forward procedure to help the doctor work out if there is anything wrong with your prostate.

Prostate secretion test

When your prostate is being examined, sometimes the doctor may massage the prostate so that some prostate fluid

will be produced and released through your penis. The fluid will be collected and sent to the laboratory to be tested. Your doctor will not massage your prostate if it is very tender or painful.

After this you may be asked for another urine sample.

The results of these tests will help the doctor decide what may be the best treatment for you.

Urinary tract Infection

If you think you have a urinary tract infection it is best to see your GP as soon as possible to start treatment. Signs of this include a burning feeling when passing urine, smelly and cloudy urine and feeling you need to pass urine often but only a little dribbles out.

If your doctor has advised you to take a medication, you must finish the full course of antibiotics or tablets. This is important even if you are feeling better as the infection could come back.

Tips to help relieve prostatitis

Hygiene

Wash your hands thoroughly after a bowel movement to stop spreading infection. Keep your penis clean.

Safe sex

Wearing a condom helps prevent catching an infection during intercourse, especially during anal intercourse.

Passing urine

Empty your bladder frequently and completely.

Warm baths

Sitting in a bath with hot water just covering your buttocks can help relieve pain.

Laxatives

If you have difficulty or pain when moving your bowels then a mild laxative or stool softener may help. Ask your GP or pharmacist for more advice on this.

Diet

Avoid foods that might irritate the bladder such as, alcohol, citrus fruit and hot and spicy foods. Eat high fibre foods to help prevent constipation such as fruit, vegetables and whole grain cereals.

Exercise

Gentle regular exercise may help prevent symptoms. Some activities such as cycling and horse riding may make symptoms worse so these are best avoided during times when you have pain or inflammation.

Drinks

Avoid alcohol and drinks with caffeine eg tea, coffee, cola drinks. Remember energy and performance drinks or energy shots can have high amounts of caffeine added.

Drink enough fluid to make sure that you pass urine regularly during the day

In addition

Some men try deep breathing, relaxation, yoga, pilates, acupuncture, meditation or body massage therapy. Being referred to a specialist physiotherapist or pain specialist may also help.

The information contained in this leaflet has been developed by Prostate Scotland and reviewed by its Advisory Group of doctors, nurses and patients. This leaflet is not intended to replace medical advice or seeing a doctor for specific illnesses or symptoms.

Contact Us

Prostate Scotland, 6 Hill Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3JZ

Email: info@prostatescotland.org.uk

Web: www.prostatescotland.org.uk Tel: 0131 603 8660

Date: March 2012 © Prostate Scotland

The Information and Advice Project for Prostate Scotland has been made possible through funding from the Scottish Government and Sir Tom Farmer through the Farmer Foundation.

This leaflet was reprinted March 2012 courtesy of a kind anonymous donation.

inform support advance
www.prostatescotland.org.uk

Registered Office: Princes Exchange, 1 Earl Grey St, Edinburgh EH3 9EE.

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC037494 Company No. SC306268