

PROSTATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: GLOSSARY

Ablation	Removal or separation of something.
Adrenal glands	Small glands lying on top of the kidneys which produce a small amount of male hormone.
Androgens	Male hormones. The most active male hormone, testosterone, is produced by the testicles. Other male hormones are produced by the adrenal glands. (See information sheet number 5)
Anti-androgens	Drugs which block the effects of male hormones. (See information sheet number 5)
Asymptomatic	Not having symptoms, symptom-free.
Benign	Non-cancerous (not cancer).
Benign prostate enlargement	Non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate. (See information sheet numbers 1 and 2)
BPH	Stands for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia. A condition causing non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate.
Biopsy of the prostate	Removal of small pieces of tissue, in this case, from the prostate gland. Tissue samples are taken from different areas of the prostate, and then examined under the microscope to see if they are cancerous. (See information sheet number 3)
Brachytherapy	A type of radiotherapy of the prostate - involves the insertion of radioactive seeds directly into the prostate. (See information sheet number 3)
CAT (CT) scan	CAT stands for Computerised Axial Tomography. A series of x-ray pictures are taken in a circle around the body which are processed by a computer,
Chemotherapy	Usually refers to the killing of cancer cells with cytotoxic chemicals (cytotoxic means toxic to cells.)
Cystitis	Inflammation of the bladder, often caused by infection.
Cystoscope	A tiny tube with a lighted end which slides along the urethra and is used to examine the bladder.
Digital Rectal Examination (DRE).	An examination of the prostate through the wall of the rectum. The doctor inserts a finger in the rectum and feels the shape of the prostate. Irregularities may be caused by cancer.
Dry ejaculation	Also called reverse or retrograde ejaculation. After surgery on the prostate, a man may achieve orgasm, but produce no ejaculate. This is because of either the removal of a muscular valve which prevents the ejaculate from going backwards into the bladder (in the case of surgery called a TURP), or because the glands which produce much of the fluid in the ejaculate are also removed (in the case of a radical prostatectomy).
Ejaculate	Fluid produced at ejaculation which contains sperm and secretions from glands such as the prostate, seminal vesicles and testicles.
Gleason score.	A way of grading cancer cells. Low grade cancers (Gleason score 2,3,4) are slower growing than high grade (Gleason scores 8,9,10) cancers. (See information sheet number 3)
Grade	A way of describing how abnormal the cancer cells look, and consequently how aggressive or fast-growing the cancer is likely to be. The most commonly used grading system is the Gleason score, which ranges from 2-10. (See information sheet number 3)
Hot flush	A sudden rush of heat to the face, neck, sometimes chest and back. It can be associated with hormonal therapy for prostate cancer.
Hormone resistance	Prostate cancer cells are dependent on testosterone or male hormone for growth. Withdrawal of male hormone by surgery or by means of drugs is therefore a means of controlling its growth. However cancer cells may develop which do not need testosterone for growth. The cancer is then said to be 'hormone resistant'. (See information sheet number 5)
Hyperthermia	Higher than normal temperature. In the case of prostate cancer, a way of destroying tissue by heating.
Impotence	Inability to achieve an erection.
Indolent	Means 'lazy', usually referring to the type of cancer cells which grow only slowly.
Incontinence	Inability to hold urine or control the loss of urine
Lymph nodes	Small glands which filter tissue fluid before it returns to the blood stream. This means that they often capture cancer cells which have escaped from the main tumour and have started to spread to other parts of the body.

LHRH	Stands for Luteinising Hormone Releasing Hormone. It is produced by the hypothalamus in the brain and stimulates the pituitary (another part of the brain) to produce LH (Luteinising Hormone). This, in turn causes cells in the testicles to produce testosterone, the male hormone.
LHRH agonists	Drugs which interfere with the production of LH (see above) by the pituitary. (See information sheet no. 5)
Libido	Sex drive.
Margin-positive	See surgical margins. (See information sheet number 4)
Metastasis	A piece of cancer which has broken off from the main cancer and become established in a different part of the body. Prostate cancer metastases often occur in lymph glands, bone or in the lungs.
MRI	Stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. A way of imaging the inside of the body without using X-rays.
Nodules	Small lumps.
Oncologist	A doctor who specialises in treating cancer.
Orchiectomy	<i>(Also Orchiectomy)</i> A type of operation which removes the testicles, but usually leaves the scrotal sac or scrotum.
Pelvis/pelvic	The area of the body below the waist and surrounded by the hip and pubic bones.
Pituitary	Part of the brain which produces hormones which stimulate the testicles to produce testosterone (male hormone) and other hormones.
Prostatitis	Inflammation of the prostate. It can be caused by bacteria.
Prostatectomy	An operation to remove all or part of the prostate.
PSA	Prostate Specific Antigen (See information sheet number 1 and 2). It can be used as a test for prostate cancer or to monitor its recurrence.
Radical prostatectomy	An operation which removes the prostate and the seminal vesicles. This may be done through a cut in the abdomen or the perineum (the area of skin between the rectum and the scrotum).
Rectum	The last part of the bowel, leading to the anus, and through which stool passes.
Retrograde ejaculation	Also called reverse ejaculation. This may occur after surgery for benign enlargement of the prostate. The ejaculate travels back into the bladder instead of exiting out through the penis. This means a man is infertile, but he can still achieve orgasm.
Scrotum	A pouch of skin which contains the testicles and some other parts of the male reproductive system. It hangs outside the body and below the penis.
Seminal vesicles	Glands which lie very close to the prostate and produce secretions which form part of the ejaculate.
Staging	A way of describing how far the cancer has spread. (See information sheet number 3)
Stricture	Scar tissue which obstructs fluid flow; in the case of a urethral stricture, urine flow is obstructed.
Surgical margins	After a radical prostatectomy, the edges of the tissue which has been removed are examined to see if cancer cells are present. If they are not (negative surgical margins) the chance is higher that all of the cancer has been removed. (See information sheet number 4)
Testicles	Glands which produce sperm and the male hormone, testosterone. They are found in the scrotum.
Testosterone	The major male hormone. It is produced by the testicles. (See information sheet number 5)
TRUS	Stands for Trans-Rectal Ultra-Sound. A means of imaging the prostate in order to locate cancer. The ultrasound probe is placed in the rectum.
TURP	Stands for Trans-Urethral Resection of the Prostate. An instrument is inserted, under anaesthetic, along the urethra (urine tube) and removes prostate tissue which may be blocking the flow of urine. It is a common operation for benign enlargement of the prostate, but only occasionally used to treat prostate cancer.
Urethra	Tube which carries urine and ejaculate along the length of the penis and to the outside.

For more information contact the cancer organisation in your state by phoning 13 1120

or visit the website at: www.prostatehealth.org.au/lions
