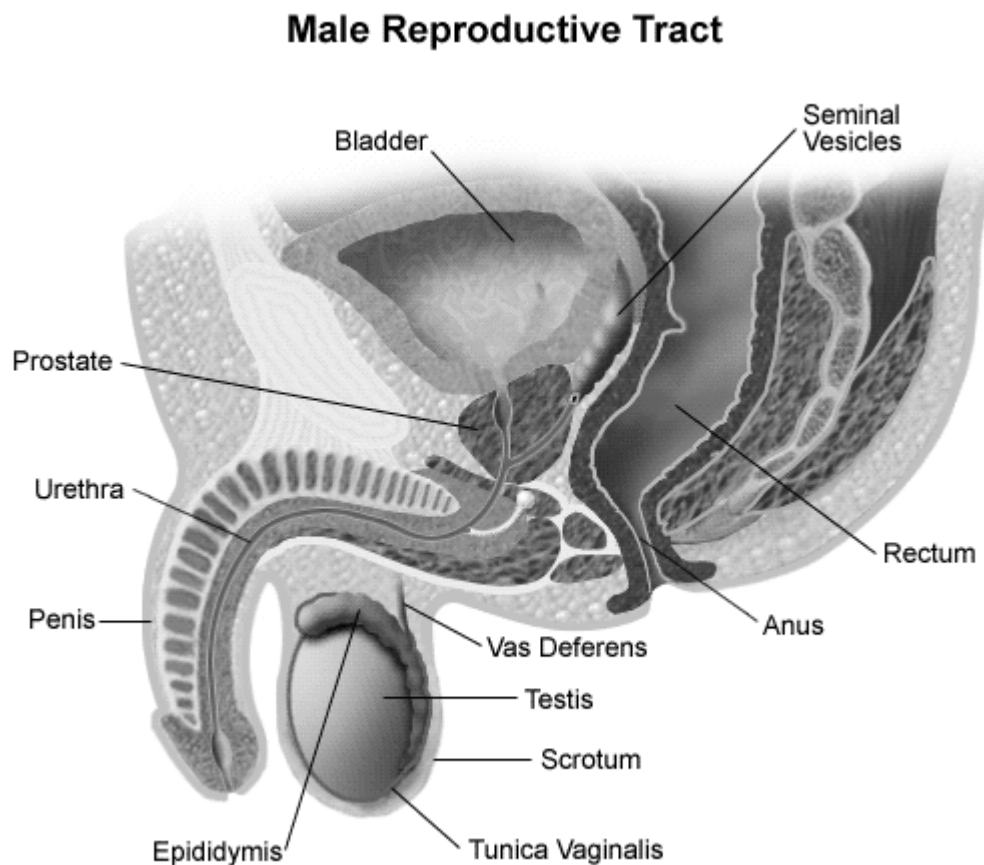


BENIGN PROSTATE HYPERPLASIA (BPH)

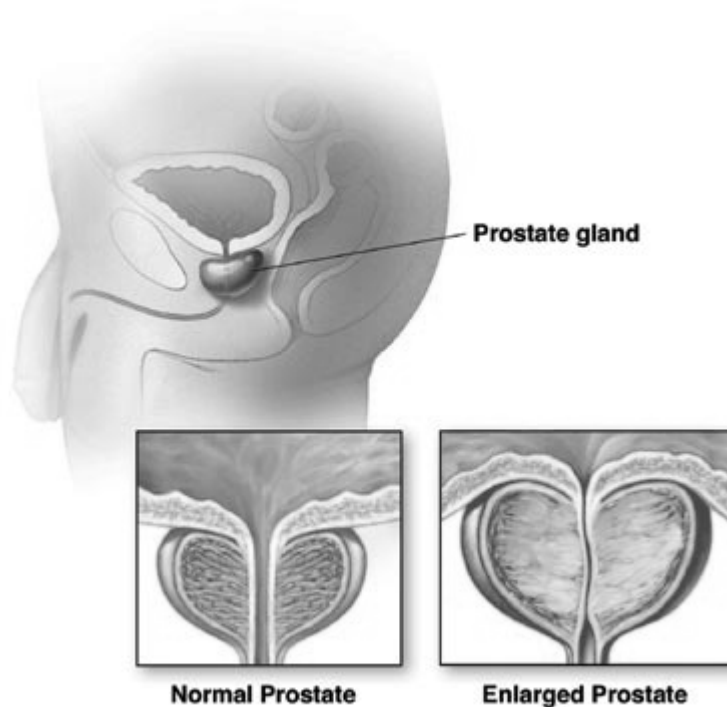
“Be
Positive &
Healthy”

What is prostate and what are its functions?



Prostate is a walnut sized gland that forms part of the male reproductive system. The prostate is located in front of the rectum and just below the bladder (where the urine is stored). The prostate also surrounds the urethra which is the canal through which urine passes out of the body. The secretion of the prostate gland increases the bulk of semen. It energizes the sperms and makes the vaginal canal less acidic, thus playing an important role in the sexual function in man.

What is BPH?



BPH stands for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (Non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate). This is an enlargement of the gland (especially of the central part) which causes an obstruction to the passage of urine.

What is cancer of the prostate gland?

In some cases, the prostate gland can become cancerous and cause destruction of normal tissue or can spread to neighbouring organs. The earliest indication could be judged by doing a simple blood test called PSA level (Prostate Specific Antigen). PSA can sometimes be falsely elevated sometimes in BPH or with urinary tract infection. It should be done routinely in all BPH patients, in patients with a family history of prostate cancer and in all patients who have

atypical symptoms which include blood in urine or semen, impotence or just pain in the back and hips.

Who suffers from BPH and why?

BPH is an age related prostate gland problem. Though BPH occurs in majority of men from the age of 40 years onwards, about 75 % of males aged 75 years have evidence of the disease. The incidence progressively increases to 95 % in males by the age of 80 years.

Why does BPH occur?

BPH is an age related disease, After 40 yrs of age the prostate gland enlarges. The surrounding capsule however prevents it from doing so, thus, exerting pressure on the urethra causing an obstruction. This restricts the outflow of urine. The bladder tries to overcome this obstruction by exerting greater amount of pressure. This causes thickening and rigidity of the bladder wall, eventually leading to incomplete emptying.

What are the symptoms of BPH?

- Increased frequency of passing urine (especially during night)
- Urgency
- Painful urination
- Feeling of incomplete urination
- Dribbling of urine
- A hesitated or interrupted & weak stream of urine.

As the disease progresses there may be a complete stoppage of urine.

Why does the prostate gland grow during old age?

The prostate gland grows in 3 stages,

- It is a very small gland at birth
- It grows rapidly at the age of puberty and the size remains the same till the man reaches the age of 40 - 45 yrs.
- After this age, in upto 50 % of males, the prostate starts growing once again.

The excess conversion of the hormone testosterone to its derivative dihydro-testosterone is responsible for growth in old age.

How is BPH diagnosed?

BPH is diagnosed by

- Digital rectal examination
- Clinical symptoms
- Uroflowmetry
- Ultrasonography

What is the solution for the problem of BPH?

BPH can be effectively managed by a variety of therapeutic agents available in the market. However, it has been observed that many people hesitate to present their case to the doctor. A social stigma is associated with this disorder. Many people ignore the symptoms thinking that BPH is an age-related problem, which has got no cure. People suffering from BPH usually prefer to remain aloof and are isolated from family and society. This adds on to the psychological pressure or depression in these patients.

What are the treatment options available for BPH?

When a patient with BPH comes to the doctor he will examine the patient and may ask for further investigations like Ultrasonography, Uroflowmetry analysis etc. Depending on the severity of the disease, the treatment options for the patient are medical therapy or surgery.

Is surgery mandatory for all the patients?

No, depending on the severity of the symptoms and the growth of the prostate, the doctor will decide the treatment option. The most widely accepted mode of surgical treatment is a Trans – urethral resection of Prostate (TURP). It is carried out by a camera assisted device which is inserted through the urethra. Being a short procedure, it is generally done under local or a short general anaesthesia. It is quite safe, and at the hands of an experienced surgeon, it has very low post-operative morbidity.

In a small percentage of patients an approach through the urinary bladder may be necessary. It is a slightly longer and slightly more complex surgery done through an abdominal incision.

Recently Holmium Laser has been used successfully in place of TURP as a mode of surgical treatment.

What are the medical options available for the management of BPH?

Today, in India 3 types of treatment options are available:

- Alpha Blockers – They relax the smooth muscles of the urethra and the bladder, thereby increasing the urine flow and relieving the symptoms of BPH. However, Alpha-blockers are not the cure for BPH as they only provide symptomatic relief and have no effect on the size of the prostate. Moreover, alpha-

blockers are associated with side effects like postural hypotension (lowering of blood pressure as the position of the patient is changed) and impotency.

- 5-AlphaReductase Inhibitors – They claim to reduce the size of the prostate and thereby relieve the symptoms of BPH, but it has been observed that a minimum of six months of therapy is warranted to judge whether the patient will benefit from the treatment. These drugs are also associated with side effects like impotency in some cases.
- Phyto Therapeutic Agents – This is an upcoming and promising way to treat BPH, e.g. Pyginum Africanum extracts. They may relieve symptoms in some cases.

Thus we have seen that BPH is an almost inevitable process of aging in males. It needs to be corrected not because of the disease process, but due to the symptomatic disturbances it causes in routine day-to-day living.

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