



SENIOR HEALTH

Prostate Disease

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The prostate gland is a small, walnut-sized gland located below the bladder and above the rectum. This gland produces about 30 percent of the fluid portion of semen.

ENLARGED PROSTATE

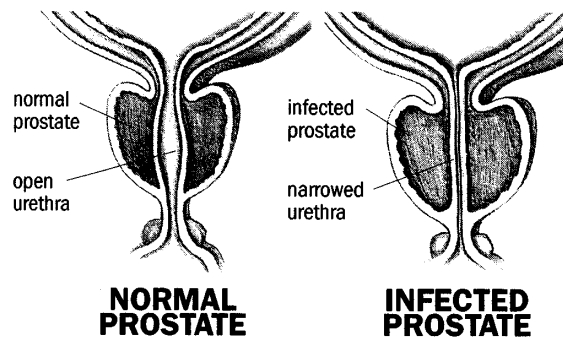
When this gland becomes enlarged, it can block the urethra, making urination difficult or impossible. The prostate enlarges as part of the aging process, starting in a man's late 40s. Four out of every five men between the ages of 50 and 60 have enlargement of the prostate.

Symptoms of an Enlarged Prostate

- frequent need to urinate
- difficulty urinating
- decreased strength and force of the urine stream
- dribbling after urination
- a distended bladder, which causes abdominal swelling
- complete inability to urinate (If you experience this symptom see your doctor immediately.)

Diagnosis and Treatment

See your doctor for proper diagnosis. Your doctor may perform a digital rectal exam to feel if your prostate is enlarged. Blood and urine tests and an ultrasound of the prostate gland and bladder may also be done to ensure that the enlarged prostate is noncancerous. An enlarged prostate is not a serious condition, unless urination becomes difficult or impossible and the bladder becomes infected. The most common treatment for an enlarged prostate is oral medication. Surgery is also a successful method of treatment.



INFECTED PROSTATE (PROSTATIS)

Prostatitis occurs when the prostate gland becomes infected or inflamed. In most cases, the cause is unknown. Sometimes, the pressure from an enlarged prostate will cause the bladder to become overworked and less efficient. Some urine may be left in the bladder and infections can occur.

Symptoms of an Infected Prostate

- pain or burning sensation during urination
- urgent and frequent need to urinate
- sudden fever and chills
- pain in the pelvis, genital area, lower back or the area between the rectum and the testicles
- discharge from the penis
- blood in the urine
- loss of sex drive
- impotence
- painful erections or ejaculations

Diagnosis and Treatment

If you think you have an infected prostate, see your doctor for antibiotic treatment.