



September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month: What Men Should Know



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(SALEM, OHIO) – September 10, 2021 – Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men after skin cancer. Yet, many men don't think about their prostate until it starts causing them problems.

While prostate cancer can spread to other parts of the body, it typically grows slowly and can often be treated successfully - particularly when detected in its early stages.

“The prostate is a small, walnut-shaped gland located under a man's bladder that is an important part of the male reproductive system. Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the prostate become abnormal and grow out of control, forming a tumor,” explained Steven Swain, M.D., FAAFP, a board certified Family Medicine physician affiliated with SRMC Primary Care in Salem and Damascus.

Risk Factors

According to Dr. Swain, certain risk factors can affect a man's likelihood of developing prostate cancer, including:

Age: A man's risk of developing prostate cancer increases significantly after age 50, with the majority of cases diagnosed in men 65 and older.

Family History: Having a close relative with prostate cancer, such as a father or brother, doubles a man's risk of developing the disease.

Race/Ethnicity: While all men are at risk for prostate cancer, African-American men are at higher risk.

Lifestyle Factors: Lifestyle factors, such as physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet and smoking, can increase a person's chance of developing many types of cancer, including prostate cancer.

Symptoms

Prostate cancer often causes no signs in its early stages. When symptoms do occur, they may include urinary problems such as frequent or painful urination; difficulty urinating or weak urine flow; trouble emptying the bladder completely; and blood in the urine. Some men may also experience painful ejaculation or chronic pain in the back, hips or pelvis.

“It’s important to note that the symptoms of prostate cancer can also be caused by other, non-cancerous prostate conditions like benign prostatic hyperplasia or prostatitis. If you are having symptoms, you should see your health care provider for an evaluation,” Dr. Swain said.

Screening & Prevention

“While there’s no one way to prevent prostate cancer, some men may benefit from screening tests that can help detect prostate cancer early. Screening tests for prostate cancer include a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, which measures the amount of PSA protein in the blood; and a physical examination of the prostate to check for abnormalities,” he added.

Dr. Swain advises that men should talk with their doctor to make an informed decision on whether a prostate screening is right for them.

The American Cancer Society recommends that men, who are at average risk of prostate cancer, begin talking to their doctors about the advantages and disadvantages of screening starting at age 50. African-American men and men with a family history of prostate cancer should speak to their providers earlier, beginning at age 45.

Board certified Family Medicine physician Steven Swain, M.D., FAAFP, sees patients of all ages at two SRMC Primary Care locations in Salem and Damascus:

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