

June 2011

1. When is Men's Health Week?
2. Why is there a special week for men's health?
3. What is the difference in life expectancy between men and women?
4. What is the prostate?
5. What is it for?
6. What happens-- when it becomes larger?
7. Name two symptoms of prostate enlargement?
8. How many men suffer from this?
9. What causes it?
10. How can it be treated?



Answers on the bottom of second page



Men's Health Week

The week leading up to Father's Day was first dedicated to the issue of men's health in 1994 by congress in America to raise awareness of diseases like prostate cancer which can be treated if it is detected early but very often men don't come forward in time.

It is now internationally recognised and becoming more common for people to wear the blue ribbon (like the pink one for breast cancer) to show support for men's health and especially concerning prostate cancer which is the cause of 10,000 deaths each year in the UK.

The life expectancy of men is on average, about 5 years less than for women. It is hoped by running this annual week, men

will be encouraged to seek medical advice for any symptoms they suffer from, and may be even have a general check up despite not feeling unwell.

So if you can encourage your partner to visit his GP or local pharmacist, particularly if they are over 50, you may help to improve his health. Men's Health Week will run from the 13th to 19th June.

Enlarged Prostate

One of the commonest problems older men get is an enlarged prostate with about 60% of men over 60 suffering. This number increases as they get older. The prostate is a small gland behind the penis which produces a thick white fluid that mixes with sperm to produce semen

It is thought that as men get older either they produce more dihydrotestosterone (DHT)



which stimulates the growth of this gland or that the levels of testosterone fall so there is more oestrogen which may be responsible.

Once it gets bigger it puts pressure on the bladder and urethra – the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the end of the penis. This makes passing water more difficult with a frequent need to urinate, difficulty in waiting to get to the loo and then having to strain to start the flow.

Treatment

Life style changes

If this describes you then depending on how bad your symptoms are, you can start by changing your lifestyle to improve matters. This would involve not drinking any liquids one to two hours before you go to bed so you are less likely to need to go to the loo in the night. Limiting the amount of alcohol and caffeine you drink as these irritate the bladder so making your symptoms worse. Take more exercise. Walking for 30 to 60 minutes a day can improve the problem.

Training

There is also bladder training where you will be taught an exercise programme to increase the amount of urine your bladder can hold. The exercises will include breathing, relaxation and muscles routines and aim to increase the time you can hold onto your urine to 5 or 6 hours. These should not be attempted without medical supervision as doing them incorrectly could damage your bladder muscle.

Medication

For more serious symptoms medication may be given on top of the lifestyle changes and training. The usual treatment is one of two drugs:

Finasteride -This blocks the effects of DHT on your prostate gland. it will produce an immediate improvement but you need to take it for six months to get the full benefit.

Tamsulosin- This is an alpha blocker that relaxes your bladder muscles making it easier to pass urine.

Surgery

There are various surgical procedures that can help ease the flow of urine but these are normally only tried if medication has not helped.

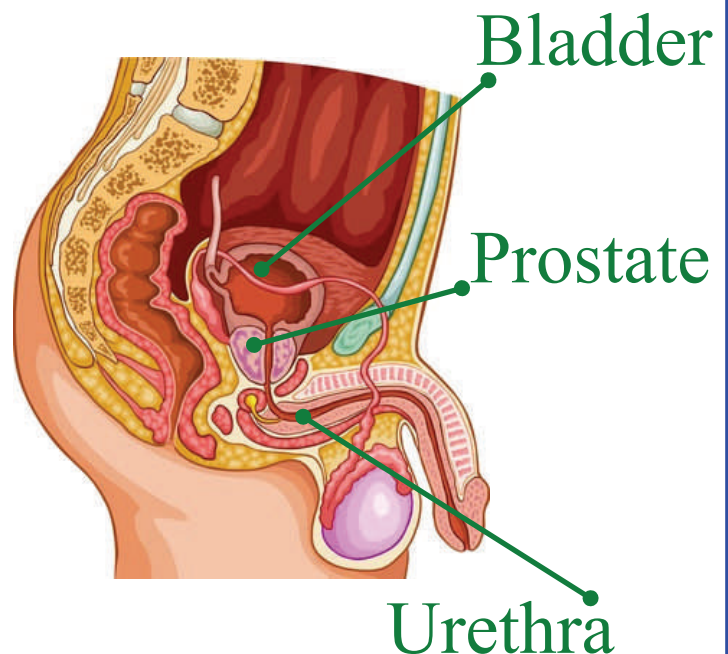
An enlarged prostate does not mean you are more likely to suffer from prostate cancer but as the symptoms are similar it is important you seek medical advice to make sure.

Men's Health Week 2011: Get A Man Online

Men's Health Week 2011 (13-19th June) will focus on how new technologies can be used to improve men's health. Plans for the week include:

- A new **smartphone app** using humour to raise men's health awareness and, in partnership with NHS Choices
- A new **mini-manual** to encourage men to get health info online

The Relationship between the prostate and Bladder



Answers to Quiz: Q1. The 13th to 19th June 2011, Q2. To raise awareness of men's health especially prostate cancer., Q3. On average women live 5 years longer, Q4. It is a small gland found only in men, behind the penis, Q5. It produces a thick white fluid that mixes with sperm to create semen, Q6. It puts pressure on the bladder and urethra, Q7. Frequent need to urinate, difficulty in postponing urination, having to push or strain to begin urinating, Q8. 60% of men aged over 60, Q9. It is known but thought to be linked to hormone changes due to aging, Q10. By changing your life style, medication or surgery, depending on how bad symptoms are.