

2. How Does the Prostate Gland Work?



“Everything I teach (Yoga and Life Coaching), everything I write about and any advice I give to people is based upon my personal experience and on what I do myself. I have taken a stand and declared that my health is my responsibility.”

Sam Rao. Professional Yoga Teacher, LifeSuccess Coach with special interest in Health.

This is the second of five articles, available to download and study, in which we explore the issues around prostate cancer; how the prostate works; developing your own understanding; planning your protection strategy; and a woman's guide to supporting her man in looking after his health.

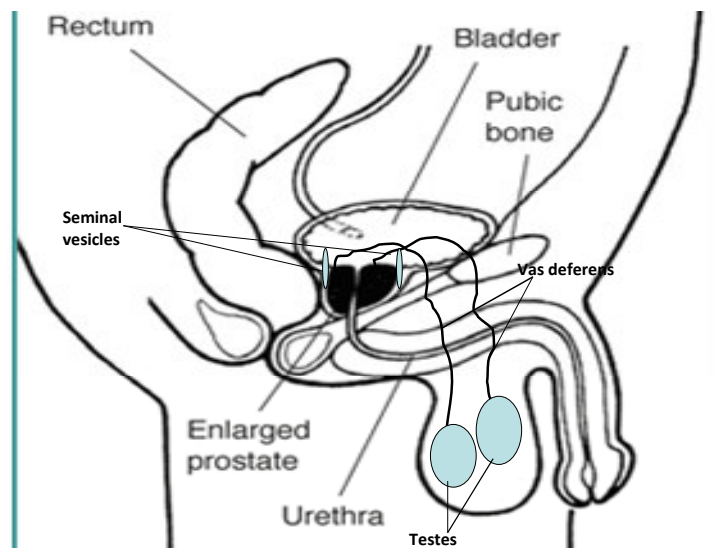
In article one, we looked at the incidence of prostate cancer and the importance of understanding how to protect yourself against it. In this article, we look at the prostate in more detail and explore what symptoms you should look out for.

Where is the Prostate and What Does it Do?

The prostate gland is the size of a walnut and sits in the small space behind the pubic bone, under the urinary bladder and in front of the rectum and the sacral bones.

The prostate gland is part of the male reproductive system and it produces up to 70% of the whitish fluid called semen.

- ❖ **The urethra** runs directly through the prostate gland and carries both urine and semen out of the body.
- ❖ **The vas deferens** are the two tubes that emerge from the testes and bring the sperms to the centre of the prostate gland.
- ❖ **The Seminal Vesicles** Two more tubes join at the centre and bring the “food” the sperm will use on their journey.



During sexual intercourse, all the various components of semen come together at the centre of the prostate gland. The powerful muscular action of the prostate gland and the surrounding muscles help to deliver the sperm in a burst of energy during ejaculation.

What Are The Warning Signs?

Problems with the prostate gland can be slow to build up, but sometimes problems do arrive rapidly and with very little warning! Therefore regular check-up and early detection of any problem is the key. Observe if you have any or some of these signs.

Raised PSA count: see below under “what actions to take”.

Blood in urine: this is very easy to check. Simply “pee” in a clear glass and hold it up to light. Blood cells will be clearly visible if present. If there is blood in urine then go and see your doctor.

Frequent visits to the toilet: especially at night. Getting up several times during the night to pee is an indication of trouble with the prostate gland. This also includes feeling of not being able to empty the bladder fully.

Urine flow rate: restricted flow with difficulty starting and stopping. Most men suffer from this but only occasionally, like when holding for long time during long car journeys or travel.

Burning sensation during urination: it can be difficult to tell if the burning sensation is deep inside the penis or towards the end of the penis. In either case make a note and observe if it is every time, or only on rare occasions. Urinary infections are not uncommon and better checked out as soon as possible.

Referred pain: sometimes there is a constant, dull pain in the pelvic region. The pain is reported often felt towards the back of the hips. This could be referred pain or simply over stretched muscles.

So What Action Should You Take?

Whether or not you are currently experiencing any of the above symptoms, if you are over 30, you should ask for an appointment with your GP and ask for a blood test to check your PSA count.

PSA Count: PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) is a protein that leaks out of the prostate gland into the blood stream. Measurements are done in nano grammes per millilitre (ng/ml)

- A value around **four ng/ml or less** is considered to be in the normal range.
- A reading of greater than **four**, but less than **10** is usually due to a benign enlargement (Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia or BPH) preventing the normal flow of urine.
- A reading of greater than **10** may also just be BPH, but the higher the level of PSA, the more serious the situation.

Where Can I Get More Information?

In the next article, ***Developing Your Own Understanding*** I examine the two types of prostate cancer and who is especially at risk.

I want men and women to have information on prostate cancer *before* the problem appears. These articles are about taking action ahead of any changes in the prostate gland.

I am writing a book which is planned for completion by June 2009 with a much more detailed plan of action. In the meantime, I urge you to download and study all the articles from my website, to gain all the information you need to protect yourself from prostate cancer and its effects on you and your relationships.

Make *your* health *your* responsibility.

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useful websites:

<http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk/>

<http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk/Cancertype/Prostate>

<http://www.samraoyoga.com/information-prostrate.php>