

Facts About Prostate Cancer

February 2009

What You Should Know

- Prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in both Michigan and the United States.¹
- Prostate cancer was the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Michigan men in 2005.²
- Michigan's prostate cancer mortality rate ranks 35th in the nation, with 16 states having lower mortality rates.³
- Since about 1990 it has become more common for men to have tests to find prostate cancer early. The prostate cancer death rate has dropped, too. But it is not yet known if this drop is the direct result of the tests.⁴
- Because treatment of prostate cancer may have serious adverse side effects (including urinary incontinence and sexual impotence), every man should discuss with his physician his personal risk status, the risks and the benefits of early detection of prostate cancer, and the relevance of screening.⁴
- Men who may benefit from screening include⁴:
 - ✓ Men considered at high risk (African American men, men with a close relative with prostate cancer diagnosed before the age of 65 years.) Screening should start at age 45.
 - ✓ All other men between the ages of 50 who have a life expectancy greater than 10 years.

Risk Factors

- Age is the greatest risk factor for prostate cancer. Approximately 3.2% of Michigan men diagnosed with prostate cancer in

2005 were under the age of 49. More than 96% of men diagnosed with prostate cancer were 50 years of age or older.¹

- Other factors that increase an individual's risk of developing prostate cancer include African-American ancestry and a close family history of prostate cancer.⁴

➤

Incidence and Mortality

- During 2005, 7,568 Michigan men were newly diagnosed with prostate cancer.¹
- During 2006, 899 Michigan men died of the disease.²
- The American Cancer Society estimated that in the United States, 186,320 men were diagnosed and 28,660 men died of prostate cancer in 2008.
- Since the early 1990s, the incidence of prostate cancer in Michigan has declined, but it still exceeds the national incidence rates.^{1,3}
- African-American men have the highest incidence of prostate cancer and are also more likely than Caucasian men to die of the disease. The incidence of prostate cancer is 1.6 times greater and mortality is 2.2 times greater in African-Americans as compared with Caucasians.^{1,2}

Stage at Diagnosis

- In Michigan, 78.9% of prostate cancer cases diagnosed during 2005 were found at a local stage.¹
- Approximately 98.9% of men with prostate cancer live at least five years.³ Survival from prostate cancer is greatest if the cancer is detected before it has spread outside the prostate.⁴

Screening and Diagnosis

- There are two procedures used to detect prostate cancer:
 - Digital rectal examination (DRE)
 - PSA blood test, which measures the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) protein made by prostate cells
- The PSA test is the most reliable method of detecting pre-clinical prostate cancer, but it is not a perfect test. PSA levels can be high because of other conditions that are not cancer. Some men who have prostate cancer do not have elevated PSA levels. Furthermore, PSA tests can't detect how dangerous the cancer is because many prostate cancers are slow growing and may never cause problems.⁴
- If screening is to be done, most experts recommend that the PSA test be accompanied by a rectal exam, to improve the likelihood of an accurate diagnosis.⁴

References:

1. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2005 Michigan Cancer Incidence File
2. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2006 Michigan Resident Death Files
3. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2005 National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD
4. American Cancer Society