

Prostate Cancer Awareness

March is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



What is the prostate gland?

The prostate gland is about the size of a walnut and it lies at the base of the bladder. It surrounds the tube (urethra) which carries urine and semen out of the penis. Only men have a prostate gland and it produces the fluid which carries sperm.

How common is prostate cancer?

Prostate Cancer is the second most common cause of death by cancer in men. It mainly affects those over 50 years of age, but in recent years there has been an increase in the number of cases in younger men. In 2008, 226 men died from Prostate Cancer in Northern Ireland.

The majority of prostate problems are not cancer; and prostate cancer, once localised, responds well to treatment and may be cured.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

The prostate tends to become bigger with age and because of its position can cause problems with urination.

The symptoms of cancer can be similar to those found in men who have other non-cancerous conditions, eg Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia and Prostatitis. These may include:

- Needing to urinate more often, especially at night
- Needing to rush to the toilet or passing urine when you don't expect to
- Difficulty starting or straining to pass urine
- Blood in the urine
- Taking a long time to finish, with dribbling at the end
- A weak flow
- A feeling that your bladder has not emptied properly
- Pain when passing urine
- Pain when ejaculating
- Pain in the testicles.

If you have any of these symptoms, it is important to find out whether it is cancer or not, so you should visit your GP for further advice. For many men in the early stages of the disease there are no symptoms to alert them to prostate cancer, therefore it is important to be aware of issues around prostate health.

Prostate cancer is now easier to detect and treat but it is important that men seek advice as early as possible.

The Ulster Cancer Foundation operates a confidential information helpline, and prostate cancer support groups. For further information contact the **Helpline: 0800 7833339** (free phone) or you can email infocis@ulstercancer.org if you have any queries or concerns.

You can also speak to your GP if you have any concerns.

References and Additional Sources of Information

www.nicsohs.gov.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.nci.nih.gov

www.cancerhelp.org.uk

www.doh.gov.uk

www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

www.ulstercancer.org

www.actioncancer.org

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus



The Northern Ireland Civil Service
Occupational Health Service
Centre for Workplace Health Improvement
Lincoln Building
27-45 Great Victoria Street
BELFAST BT2 7SH

Tel: (028) 9025 1888
Fax: (028) 9025 1539
email: clientservices@nicsohs.gov.uk
web: www.nicsohs.gov.uk