

Coping During Prostate Cancer Treatment



No matter what type of treatment you choose, life with prostate cancer can be challenging. During treatment, your healthcare team can help you cope with and manage any physical and emotional issues. The support of your family and friends can help, too. You might also find it helps to talk with other men who are dealing with the same issues. Ask your team about in-person or online support programs.



Some changes to expect

Changes in sexual function

Treatment for prostate cancer often affects your sexual function. This includes your interest in sex or sex drive. And it also includes erectile dysfunction (ED). This is when you have trouble getting or keeping an erection. In most cases, these problems can be treated. The type of cancer treatment you get, your age at diagnosis, and your sexual function before treatment can all affect your risk of ED and changes in sex drive after treatment. Talk with your urologist for help. These changes are common, and there are a lot of different ways to deal with them. Your healthcare provider may recommend medicine or devices to help with ED. And be sure to talk with your partner about ways to make sure your relationship is satisfying for both of you.

Urinary problems

Bladder control can change after surgery or radiation therapy for prostate cancer. It usually gets better over time, but it might take several weeks or months. You may have some loss of bladder control. Or you may find it hard to urinate. Be sure to empty your bladder fully when urinating. Any urine left in your bladder for a long time may cause a urinary tract infection. If you feel like you can't fully empty your bladder, talk with your healthcare team right away. Most urinary problems can be treated with things like special exercises, medicine, or surgery.

During treatment

During treatment, your urologist will watch you closely. Your overall health and how the cancer is responding to treatment will be kept track of. Your healthcare team will help you manage any symptoms caused by treatment. Each man responds differently to prostate cancer treatment. Keep talking with your team during treatment. Let them know about any symptoms you notice. Talk about any concerns or questions you have. They want to help you deal with any side effects of treatment. Most symptoms and side effects can be managed, and some can even be prevented.

After treatment

Your urologist will continue to watch your health. Your healthcare team will also help you treat any ongoing symptoms or side effects. Tests will also be done to watch for signs that the cancer has come back. The American Cancer Society gives specific advice for men with a history of prostate cancer. This includes:

- Checking with your healthcare provider before taking any vitamins or supplements
- Get regular physical activity and eat a healthy diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- If you smoke, get help to quit. Ask your healthcare team for resources.

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