

Title:

Knowing Your Cancer Risk

Word Count:

396

Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among American men after skin cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Based on this statistic, most people might assume that the majority of American men are well educated about how best to fight prostate cancer, where to turn for more information and what support group an uncle or golf buddy relied on during their respective battles with the disease.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. While women regularly host breast cancer awareness and fund-raising walks across the country, men have been less proactive on matters related to their health, including essential measures such as soliciting second opinions and researching treatment options. The result of this passive approach is that the average man does not always make good, informed decisions about his own health care.

A new program is encouraging men to alter their approach to health care, at least when it comes to battling prostate cancer. Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network, along with Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization, have founded the "Partner's Program" to help men with prostate cancer and their partners face the diagnosis together, encourage them to seek information regarding treatment options, and ultimately, make more well-informed treatment decisions.

This program clearly responds to an unmet need. Recently, an Us TOO- and Y-ME-commissioned survey found that, although the majority of men with prostate cancer have heard of both surgery and radiation as treatment options, up to 38 percent don't know that other treatments, such as hormonal therapy, even exist.

Even more alarming, less than 50 percent of men with prostate cancer take the time to get a second opinion on their diagnosis or proposed treatment. These facts are sure to concern anyone who loves a man at risk of developing prostate cancer.

The good news for wives and partners is the survey found that men don't want to face prostate cancer treatment choices alone, making a resource like the "Partner's Program" attractive for both men and women. While men are not typically as open as women on subjects such as prostate cancer, the survey found that almost 70 percent of men age 50 and older indicated that they would like their partner to play an active role in the process of choosing an appropriate course of therapy.

Now, with the help of the "Partner's Program," the average American man may become more proactive about his health.