

# Enlarged Prostate

The prostate is part of the male reproductive system. It is a walnut-sized gland located just below your bladder and surrounding the urethra. One of its main roles is to produce the fluid part of semen. This fluid energizes the sperm as it travels out of the penis.

The prostate can grow larger as you age. An enlarged prostate is often called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is not cancer.

## What happens when the prostate grows larger?

Urine flows out from your bladder through the urethra. As the prostate grows, it may press on the urethra and slow or stop urination, causing symptoms of BPH. Over time, this urinary retention caused by severe BPH can lead to infection, bladder stones, or incontinence. It can also lead to bladder or kidney damage.

## How do you know if you have BPH?

Symptoms of BPH are most often noticed during urination:

- Frequent urination
- Getting up at night to urinate
- Urgency
- Feeling of incomplete emptying
- Stopping and starting while urinating
- Straining to urinate
- Weak urinary stream

Your healthcare provider can conduct other tests to diagnose BPH.

## How is BPH managed?

Sometimes symptoms of mild BPH clear up without treatment. A provider may choose to perform regular checkups and watch for early problems before starting treatment.

Other treatments for BPH include:

- Oral medicine
- Procedures using heat or sound waves to destroy some of the enlarged prostate that is pressing on the urethra
- Surgery to cut away some of the enlarged prostate
  - Most surgery for BPH is done through the urethra, without external cuts

**Talk to your healthcare provider about your prostate health.  
Be sure to contact your provider at the first signs of trouble with urination  
or any other symptoms that bother you.**