



## Cancer not the only Prostate problem

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The word "Cancer" gets notice. I've been in medicine nearly 20 years and one thing I know, every patient fears hearing the word Cancer. For men, it's usually Prostate Cancer that gets their attention.

Although Prostate Cancer gets a lot of play in men's health magazines and the news media, there are other, more common problems men can have with this walnut-sized gland. Some bring pain or discomfort. Others are precursors to cancer. All need to be discussed.

The most common prostate problem in **men under 50** is Prostatitis -- inflammation or infection.

The prostate, part of a man's sex organs, surrounds the tube called the urethra. The urethra has two jobs – to carry urine from the bladder and semen during a sexual climax. The prostate creates a fluid that, when added to sperm, makes semen.

When a man's prostate gets infected, it becomes inflamed. It squeezes the urethra, causing problems with urination and ejaculation. If you have Prostatitis, you may have one or more of the following symptoms...

- Frequent urination
- Burning sensation while going to the bathroom
- Fever
- Unexplained fatigue

With Prostatitis, the inflammation or infection is often caused by bacteria. Your health care provider can test a urine sample to see if antibiotics are needed. If no bacteria is found, and the problem persists, your physician will likely look for kidney complications or cancer.

In **men over 50**, Prostate Enlargement can wreak havoc with everyday living. It becomes more common as a man ages and often causes trouble with urination including...

- Frequent, urgent need to go to the bathroom
- Weak urine stream or small amounts of urine each time you go
- Leaking or dribbling
- Small amounts of blood in the urine
- Difficulty in beginning urination
- Feeling that you still have to go even though you just finished

An Enlarged Prostate can lead to frequent urinary tract infections, kidney damage and yes, an enlarged prostate can signify cancer. However, because the prostate naturally continues to grow as a man matures, prostate enlargement is not always a sign of cancer. For both Prostatitis and Enlarged Prostate, a digital exam is needed to help diagnose. The same is true of Prostate Cancer.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men (skin cancer is #1).

Although thousands die from Prostate Cancer every year, the fact is, early diagnosis is cutting those numbers dramatically. A simple blood test, known as the PSA (prostate-specific antigen) is a very useful tool in detecting cancer. However, it is not fool-proof and an annual digital exam is also highly recommended.

Now, I know men don't like to go to the doctor. Heck, I don't like it either and I am one. But my health is more important to me than my pride, pocketbook or schedule. Your health should be a priority too.

Call the Wilbur, Reardan or Davenport clinics for an appointment today.