



## The Doctor Will See You Now Prostate Cancer Awareness Month *Early detection is key to controlling this potential killer*



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Aside from non-melanoma skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in the United States. Despite the danger, 97 percent of men diagnosed with prostate cancer are still alive five years later.

In New Mexico in 2020, prostate cancer was number one of all new cancer cases in men and number two in the number of cancer deaths, slightly behind lung cancer. Out of a statistical sample of 100,000 New Mexican men last year, 82.7 were diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 19.1 died from the disease.

Prostate cancer is rare in men

under 40 years of age, but the chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer rises rapidly for men 50 years and older. While it can be deadly, prostate cancer often can be detected in time for effective treatment. Proactive awareness and appropriate management are the keys to staying on the right side of the statistics.

With September designated as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, now is an ideal time for older New Mexican men to adopt a preventive mindset focused on what to look for and what to know about prostate cancer.

### First, know the symptoms

The prostate is a small male organ just below the bladder and in front of the rectum. As men get older, the gland itself tends to enlarge, a condition known as benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH). BPH is not the

same as prostate cancer. In prostate cancer, cells in the prostate gland start to grow and eventually get out of control.

Not all men with prostate cancer have symptoms. Also, when symptoms occur, they are not always signs of cancer but can represent a number of health concerns, especially for older men.

Symptoms that possibly can be red flags for prostate cancer include:

- Blood in the urine or in semen
- Pain and burning during urination
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Difficulty emptying the bladder
- Persistent back, hip, or pelvis pain
- Difficulty starting urination; weak or interrupted flow
- Painful ejaculation

### Next, take action

If you or the men in your life exhibit any of these symptoms, it's

important to visit your doctor right away, get a diagnosis, and determine a course of action. Again, there are a variety of benign conditions that have similar symptoms.

For men without symptoms, there are many possible benefits of screening for prostate cancer, including lowering the chance of death in some men. Cancer screening is the practice of looking for cancer before symptoms are detected. The goal of screening is to find cancers that may be of risk of spreading if not treated, and to catch them early. The two most common tests are:

- Prostate specific antigen (PSA) test, a blood test that measures the level of PSA, a substance formed in the prostate.
- Digital rectal examination (DRE), a procedure where a health care provider examines the

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