

A little book on

BIG prostates.

A man's guide to an enlarged prostate.

*Complete the BPH symptom checklist attached
to the back cover and bring to your doctor.*

Introduction

Are you experiencing frequent bathroom breaks? Sudden urges? Incomplete emptying? Do you get up at night to urinate? If you're a man over 50, these could be signs of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia, or BPH, a medical condition caused by an enlarged prostate.

Whether you are experiencing these symptoms for the **first time**, have already talked to your doctor but your symptoms are now **getting worse**, or you are already taking **medication** but are **still** experiencing symptoms, it's time to take action. Relief is possible.

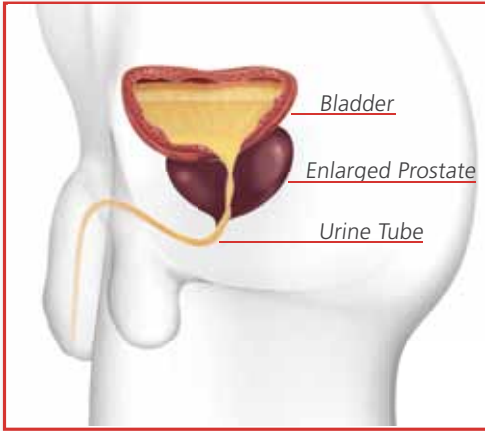
Inside, you'll find information about BPH, its symptoms and treatments, tips to help you manage your condition, as well as tools that can help you talk to your doctor.

This booklet is not intended to replace or substitute the advice of your physician. Your own health care professional is the best source of information regarding your health.

What is BPH?

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia, also called BPH, is a condition that affects the prostate gland in men. "Benign" means that it is not cancer and "Hyperplasia" means enlarged.

The prostate is a gland found between the bladder (where urine is stored) and the urethra (the tube urine passes through).



As men age, the prostate slowly grows bigger (or enlarges) due to exposure to male hormones.

If the prostate gets too big, it can press down on the urethra like a clamp on a garden hose, blocking the flow of urine and making it harder for the bladder to empty.

Fast fact:

Normally, a prostate is about the size of a golf ball. In some men with BPH however, the prostate can grow to the size of a baseball.

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Keep your eye on the ball!

**normal
prostate**



golf ball

1.68" in diameter



raquet ball

2.25" in diameter

**enlarged
prostate**



baseball

2.5" in diameter

What are the symptoms of BPH?

It is possible to have an enlarged prostate and have no bothersome symptoms. However, many men do experience symptoms such as:

- Delay or trouble starting to urinate
- Frequent urges to urinate during the day or night
- Waking and getting out of bed a few times at night to urinate
- Inability to delay urination
- Bladder doesn't fully empty, feeling like you still have to urinate, even after you've done so
- A weak urinary stream you strain to keep flowing
- An intermittent urine stream that starts and stops, or only urinating a little bit
- Urinary incontinence (loss of urine control)
- Painful urination

Take your symptoms seriously!

The symptoms of BPH can get worse as your prostate continues to grow. They can also be signs of more serious medical problems. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms you should talk to your doctor today.

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How will my doctor know if I have BPH?

You may first notice the symptoms of BPH yourself, or your doctor may find that your prostate is enlarged during a routine check-up.

Several tests can help your doctor determine whether you have an enlarged prostate. These tests vary from patient to patient, but the following are the most common.

Digital Rectal Exam (DRE): This examination is usually the first test your doctor will perform. The doctor inserts a gloved finger into the rectum and feels the part of the prostate next to the rectum. This examination gives the doctor a general idea of the size and condition of the prostate gland.

Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test: Your doctor may recommend a PSA blood test along with a DRE. PSA, a protein produced by prostate cells, is frequently present at higher levels in the blood of men who have an enlarged prostate or prostate cancer.

Your doctor may also ask you to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the severity of your symptoms and their impact on your life. Your score may be compared to past records to determine if your condition is getting worse.

Don't forget!

Men over 50 should have prostate exams every year, whether they have symptoms or not.



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How will my doctor treat my BPH?

The choice of treatment is based on the severity of your symptoms, the extent to which they affect your daily life, and if you suffer from other medical conditions. Treatment options include: **“watchful waiting”**, **medication**, or **surgery**.

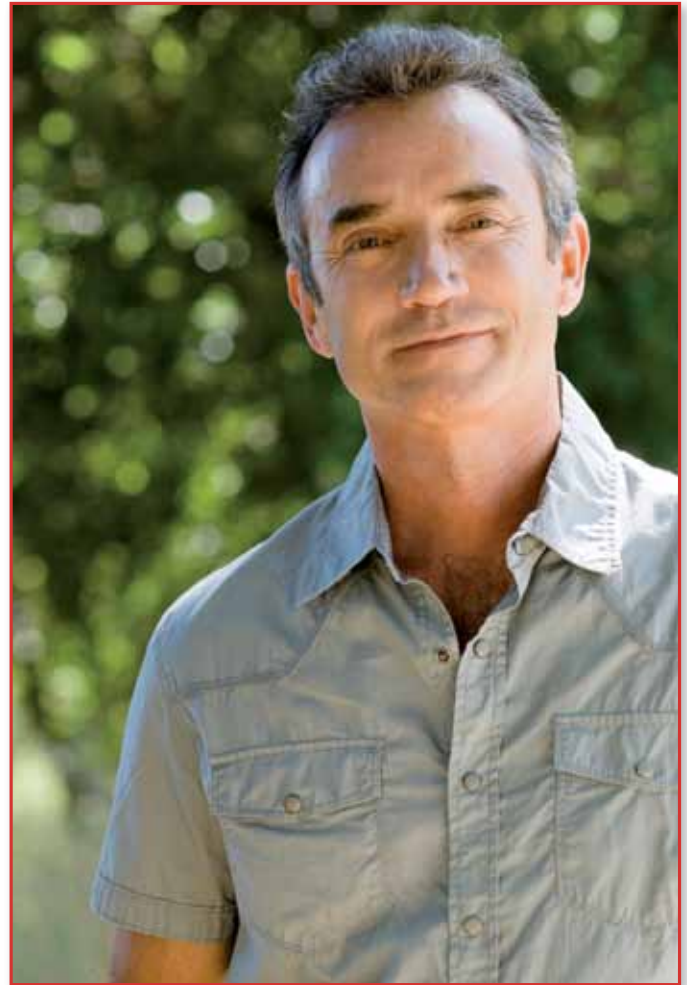
Watchful Waiting: You may have an enlarged prostate that doesn't bother you. If so, your doctor may recommend “watchful waiting”.

“Watchful waiting” is common for men with mild symptoms. It does not mean that you ignore the problem. It means that you and your doctor will monitor your condition—and the size of your prostate—through regular check-ups.

Your doctor may also suggest some lifestyle changes to help control your symptoms, and may ask you to avoid some medications that can make your symptoms worse. Both you and your doctor should decide whether “watchful waiting” is right for you. Don't do it on your own.

Don't forget!

If your symptoms change or get worse, make sure to tell your doctor immediately.



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Medication: If your symptoms start to interfere with your daily life, you may be prescribed one or more prescription medications.

1. Medications that relax muscles in the bladder and around the urethra. Some medicines, known as alpha-blockers, work by relaxing muscles in the bladder and around the urethra to improve the flow of urine.

These drugs work quickly to relieve symptoms, usually within a few days or weeks. Men taking alpha-blockers sometimes experience side effects including tiredness, nasal congestion, dizziness, and an absence of semen with orgasm. Some of these side effects go away after a few weeks of taking the medication.

Please note that this is not a complete list of side effects. Please discuss the benefits and risks of taking alpha-blockers with your doctor.



Alpha-blockers relax muscles in the bladder and around the urethra

2. Medications that shrink the prostate. Some medicines, known as 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors or 5ARIs, work to shrink the prostate by lowering the amount of hormone involved in prostate growth.

Studies have shown that 5ARIs can help treat the underlying cause of BPH, as well as lower the risk of bladder blockage and reduce the need for surgery. Because it can take a while to shrink the prostate, you may not notice an improvement in symptoms for several months. This is why your doctor may recommend you take a 5ARI with an alpha-blocker, depending on the severity of your symptoms. Men taking 5ARIs may experience side effects such as a decrease or absence of semen with orgasm, loss of sex drive, and erection difficulties.

This is not a complete list of side effects. Please discuss the benefits and risks of taking 5ARI medication with your doctor.



5ARIs shrink the prostate

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3. Combination of these medications. If you are already taking an alpha-blocker to treat your BPH symptoms, your doctor may add a 5ARI medication to help shrink the size of your prostate. In some cases, your doctor may initially prescribe a combination of these two medicines. Alpha-blockers work quickly to relieve BPH symptoms while 5ARIs work over time to shrink the enlarged prostate. If your symptoms are well controlled, your doctor may eventually recommend you discontinue the alpha-blocker and remain on the 5ARI alone.

Remember that all medications can cause side effects and may not be suitable for everyone. **Ask your doctor if medication is right for you.**

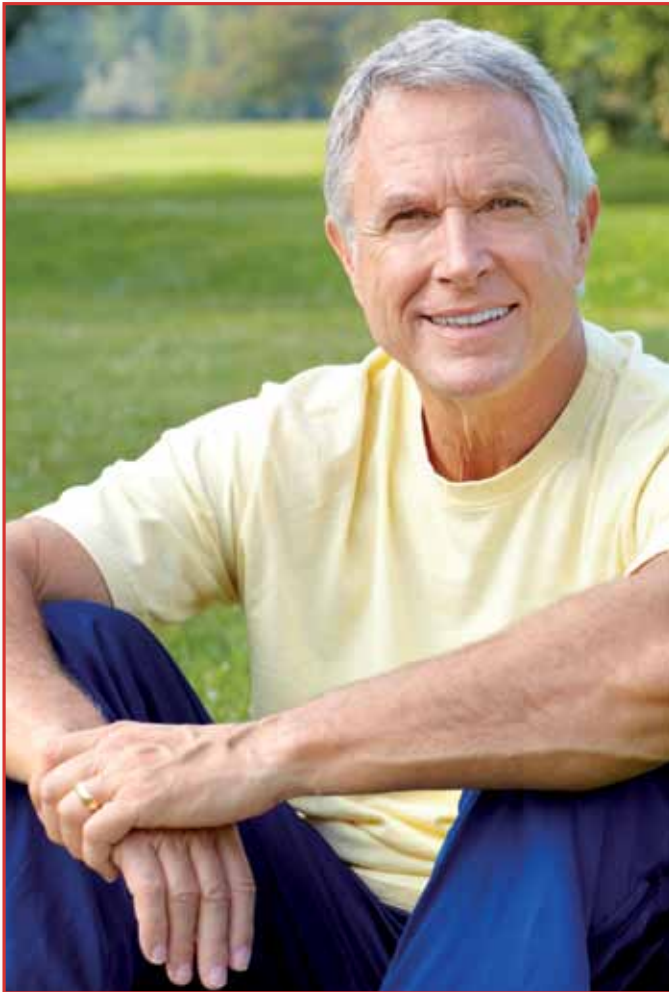
Surgery: If your symptoms are too severe, or are not improving with medication, your doctor may suggest surgery to remove the enlarged part of your prostate. Surgery is usually performed in a hospital by a specialist. There are different types of surgery, and the procedure your doctor will recommend for you will depend on the severity of your symptoms and the size of your prostate.

Remember that all types of surgery carry the possibility of complications. Your doctor can tell you about the risks and benefits of each type of surgery before deciding on your course of treatment.

Get the most from your treatment!

If you are prescribed medication, make sure to take it as directed by your doctor.





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What if I don't get treated?

Because every man is different, it's impossible to predict how your BPH will progress. Many men find that their symptoms get worse over time as the prostate continues to grow. Some men find that their symptoms change slowly, and others find that they don't change at all.

BPH Complications

Severe BPH can lead to complications. For example, BPH can damage your bladder or kidneys. It can also make you unable to urinate at all. This is called acute urinary retention (AUR), and needs to be treated urgently. If this happens, you will require a catheter (tube inserted into the bladder via the penis) to drain your bladder. Eventually you will require treatment, sometimes even surgery, to allow you to urinate again.

A study of 2115 men found that a 60-year-old man with BPH had about a *1-in-5 chance* of developing a serious problem like this by the age of 80.

Discuss your options!

When you see your doctor, be sure to discuss and carefully consider all the options for treating your BPH symptoms.

Symptoms Management Tips

If you are diagnosed with an enlarged prostate that doesn't bother you, your doctor may suggest some lifestyle changes to help control your BPH symptoms.

Although lifestyle changes do not shrink an enlarged prostate, they can help you manage your symptoms and feel healthier in general.

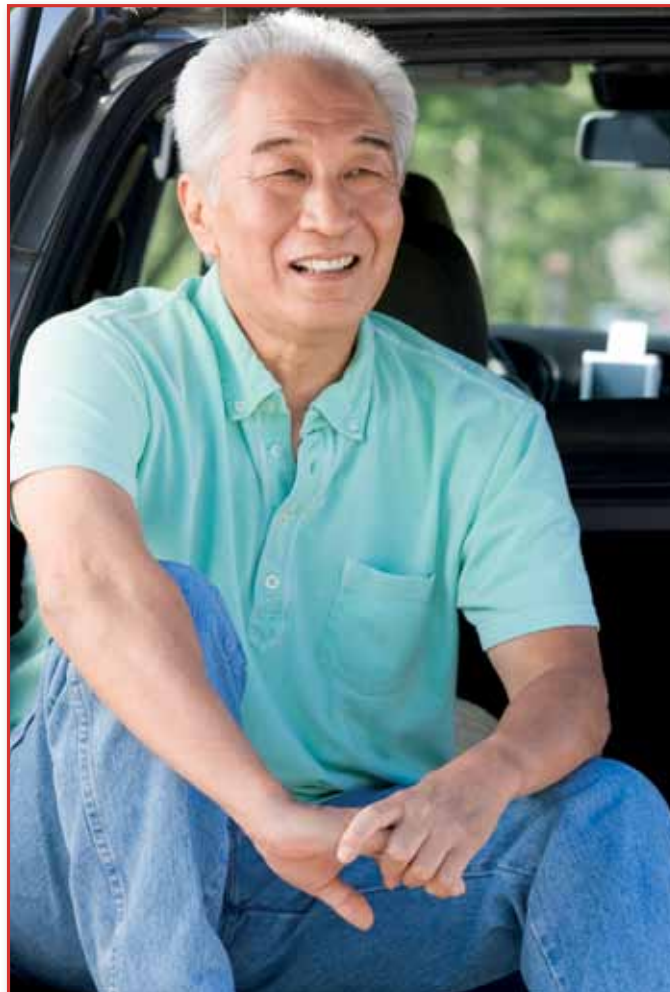
Your doctor will continue to monitor your condition—and the size of your prostate—through regular check-ups.

Try these helpful lifestyle tips:

- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine.** Alcohol and caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, and soft drinks can affect the prostate, and make you urinate more.
- **Drink less fluids, especially before going to bed.**
- **Stay active.** Physical activity may help reduce the symptoms of BPH, while obesity can make the symptoms worse.
- **Eat right.** A diet that's low in saturated fat and high in fibre may help reduce symptoms.

Don't suffer needlessly!

Lifestyle changes are a great start, but if your symptoms are affecting your quality of life, you should talk to your doctor.



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Getting Ready for Your Next Medical Appointment

Some men feel uncomfortable talking to their doctor about their symptoms. This is completely natural. Remember that having an enlarged prostate is very common, and that your doctor is a trained professional.

You're not alone!

Up to **50% of men over 50** experience BPH symptoms. Those odds go up as a man ages.

Being prepared can make your next visit a lot easier. Try these helpful tips:

- **Bring a list** of all the **medicines, supplements** and **herbal medicines** you are currently taking.
- **Go in with questions.** Here are a few examples:
 - Do I have an enlarged prostate?
 - What kind of tests will I need?
 - Are regular check-ups and some lifestyle changes (or “watchful waiting”) an option for me?
 - Is medication an option for me? If so, which one(s)?
 - How do the different medications work?
 - What are the side effects?
 - How do I take my medication(s)?
 - Do I need procedures or surgery, or will I in the future?
 - How can I avoid surgery?
 - What happens if an enlarged prostate isn't treated?

Prostate Symptom Checklist

Check all the symptoms that apply to you.

- Urination has become more difficult than it used to be.
- Many times I have to 'push' to start the flow of urine.
- I awake two or more times at night to urinate.
- When urinating, the stream stops and starts again several times.
- After I urinate, my bladder does not feel fully empty.
- When I feel the need to urinate, it is harder to wait than it used to be.
- My urinary stream is weaker and less forceful than before.
- My symptoms are having a negative impact on my daily life.

Check the box that most closely applies to you.

- I have recently started to experience symptoms.
- I have already talked to my doctor but my symptoms are getting worse.
- I am taking medication but still experience bothersome symptoms.

Your doctor can help. Bring this checklist with you to help get the conversation started.

**For more information, visit
www.MyBPH.ca**

Be ready to talk about your symptoms. Fill out this Prostate Symptom Checklist and bring it to your doctor.



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