

Enlarged Prostate (BPH)

WARWIKI

Patient Information · Why urine symptoms happen and how they're treated

An enlarged prostate — benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH — is a very common, non-cancerous growth of the prostate as men age. The enlarged gland presses on the urine channel and causes bothersome urinary symptoms. BPH is **not** cancer and does **not** cause cancer, and there are many effective treatments, from simple changes to medicines to surgery.

About This Condition

The prostate surrounds the top of the urethra. As it enlarges, it squeezes the channel, causing **lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS)**:

- Weak or slow stream, hesitancy, straining, and stop-start flow
- A feeling of **not emptying**, and dribbling at the end
- Going **frequently**, urgently, and waking at night (nocturia)

Why It Matters

BPH is usually about **quality of life**, but if it's severe it can lead to urinary infections, bladder stones, an inability to urinate (retention), or, rarely, bladder and kidney strain. How much it bothers you guides how aggressively it's treated.

LEARN THE TERMS

BPH

Benign prostatic hyperplasia — a non-cancerous enlarged prostate.

LUTS

Lower urinary tract symptoms — the urine problems BPH causes.

IPSS

A symptom score used to measure how bothersome things are.

Retention

Being unable to urinate — a reason for urgent care.

Alpha blocker / 5-ARI

The two main medicine types for BPH.

PSA

A prostate blood test, often checked as part of the evaluation.

DO I HAVE TO TREAT IT? Only if it bothers you — mild symptoms can simply be watched. When symptoms affect your life, treatment steps up from lifestyle to medicines to procedures, and there's an effective option at each level. Treatment also depends on your prostate's size, which your team will assess.

How It's Evaluated

- A **symptom score** (IPSS) and a review of your fluids and medicines
- A prostate exam, a **urine test**, and often a **PSA**
- A urine-flow test and a check of how well you empty

How It's Treated (Step by Step)

- 1 Watchful waiting & lifestyle** — adjust evening fluids, limit caffeine/alcohol, bladder habits.
- 2 Medicines** — an **alpha blocker** (fast relief), a **5-alpha-reductase inhibitor** (shrinks larger prostates), or both; sometimes others.
- 3 Minimally invasive options** — such as a prostatic-urethral lift or steam therapy.
- 4 Surgery** — TURP, HoLEP, Aquablation, or simple prostatectomy for larger glands or when other steps fall short. Each has its own handout.

Good to Know

- BPH treatment is about **your** bother level — there's no rush unless complications appear.
- Some cold/allergy medicines (decongestants) can worsen symptoms.

Seek care if you have:

- You **suddenly cannot urinate** (painful, full bladder) — urgent
- **Blood in the urine**, fever, or repeated infections
- Worsening symptoms despite treatment

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1.** BPH is a common, non-cancerous enlarged prostate causing urine-flow and frequency symptoms.
- 2.** Treat it based on how much it bothers you — lifestyle, then medicines, then minimally invasive or surgical options.
- 3.** Seek urgent care if you suddenly can't urinate, or have blood in the urine, fever, or repeated infections.