

BPH : A MAN'S NIGHTMARE

There are many causes of urinary problems in men and one of them is BPH. BPH stands for benign prostatic hyperplasia which is a common urinary problem that affects men, especially those over the age of 50. Doctors are not sure why it occurs, but one thing is certain: if you have BPH, you're not alone. BPH causes discomfort and lessens the quality of life of millions of men all over the world at some time in their lives, usually after the age of 50.

"Benign" means not cancerous. You'll be glad to know that BPH does not cause, and is not the same as, cancer of the prostate; nor are men with BPH more likely to develop this type of cancer. In fact, BPH is the most common non-cancerous tumor in men. On the other hand, a man can have both BPH and prostate cancer at the same time, so it is always important to rule out the chance of cancer.

The prostate is a gland that is normally about the size of a walnut that is located just below the bladder in a man. The prostate surrounds a portion of the urethra which is the tube that carries urine out of the bladder. Due to hormonal changes that happen when a man gets older, the size of the prostate enlarges due to an increase in the number of cells within the prostate. The growth occurs slowly and most men are not aware of the change until symptoms occur. Symptoms occur when the enlarged size of the prostate begins to push on the urethra making it narrower and slowing the flow of urine.

Doctors use the term "prostatism" to describe the numerous uncomfortable symptoms that BPH can cause. These symptoms include: Decreased size and strength of urine stream, Having hard time getting started, Dribbling after done urinating, On and off again urine flow, The feeling that your bladder isn't empty after you're done urinating, Being completely unable to urinate, Having to urinate more often than normal, An extremely strong desire to urinate as soon as possible, Needing to get up multiple times during the night to urinate, Unable to hold your urine till you can get to the bathroom.

It is advisable to seek treatment if you are having some of these symptoms as you can develop some complications. One can develop a urinary tract infection from the incomplete emptying of the bladder. The prostate gland itself can become infected as well. Both of these conditions need to be treated with medication.