

# Special Health Alert For Men Aged 50+ Get Tested Now For Prostate Health

(NAPSA)—The Prostate Health Council of the American Foundation for Urologic Disease urges men age 50 and over to learn more about prostate enlargement and consider getting an annual prostate exam.

One of the main reasons for having a prostate checkup is to detect problems such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is a progressive disease, which if left untreated can lead to troubling urinary symptoms, as well as repeated urinary tract infections, a sudden and complete inability to urinate and—in rare cases—bladder or kidney damage. BPH can progress to the point where surgery is needed.

“If you are a man over age 50, we encourage you to go for an annual exam where your physician will be able to detect prostate enlargement,” said Joseph A. Smith Jr., M.D., Co-Chairman of the Prostate Health Council of the American Foundation for Urologic Disease.

Men should talk to their doctors about symptoms before they worsen. Often, it’s the woman in a man’s life that must make sure he sees a physician. The sooner men are screened for prostate disease, the earlier a physician can determine a course of action, which may prevent disease progression.

BPH affects an estimated nine million men each year. BPH often begins after age 50 and can progress and worsen with age. More than half of men over age 60 experience BPH, and by age 80, nearly 80 percent of men have the disease.

## **BPH: What You Should Know**

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BPH symptoms may interfere with normal activities and reduce the sense of well-being. Common symptoms involve urination problems, such as:

- A weak or slower urinary stream
- A sense of incomplete bladder emptying
- The need to strain to urinate,
- And more frequent urination, especially at night.

### **Testing Recommended for Men 50+**

The American Urological Association (AUA) recommends that most men have a yearly prostate checkup starting at age 50. The checkup includes a patient-physician discussion about urinary symptoms and a digital rectal examination (DRE) to check the prostate.

During your checkup, the physician may also recommend a blood test, called the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. Most often, the PSA test is used as a means of screening for prostate cancer. However, PSA is also a predictor of prostate growth, such as BPH.

Problems with the prostate can begin as early as age 40, but often become more common with age. Men at high risk for prostate cancer, such as African Americans or those with a family history of the disease, should begin tests at age 45.

### **What Causes BPH?**

The cause of BPH is not fully known but is partially due to a hormone called dihydrotestosterone (DHT), which is crucial to prostate development. By middle age, however, the prostate tends to enlarge in size and contribute to the symptoms of BPH.

### **How Is BPH Treated?**

Effective medical treatment for BPH is available for men with BPH-related symptoms that affect their quality of life. Some men may not be bothered by symptoms and may decide on a program of watchful waiting, which involves an annual exam to see whether BPH is getting worse.

There are also medications, which treat BPH-related symptoms. Other medications treat BPH by shrinking the prostate, which relieves symptoms and prevents further complications, including surgery. However, for some men, surgery is necessary.

Talk to your doctor. Together you can devise a treatment plan to improve your symptoms, reduce your prostate size and decrease your chances of long-term complications.

For more information, contact the American Foundation for Urologic Disease at 1-410-468-1800 or [www.afud.org](http://www.afud.org).