

healthmatters

Summer 2014

Be Proactive to Prevent Prostate Cancer

PROSTATE CANCER IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF CANCER DEATH AMONG MEN. By the time symptoms appear, the cancer may be advanced. Symptoms include urinary difficulties and pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or thighs. But when diagnosed early, prostate cancer is highly treatable.

Two simple methods are often used in screening for prostate cancer:

- A digital rectal examination (DRE), in which the doctor feels the prostate gland through the rectal wall
- A blood test, in which a blood sample is tested for the presence of a substance called prostate-specific antigen (PSA)

Treatments include surgery, radiation therapy, and hormone therapy. Sometimes doctors take a wait-and-see approach. This depends on the type of prostate cancer, the man's age, and his overall health.

Prostate cancer occurs mainly in men older than age 50. African-American men have a much higher risk than Caucasian men. Family history—having a father, brother, or son with the disease—also increases risk. Research suggests that a diet high in animal fat may be a factor, too.

Medical experts disagree about the importance of routine screening for prostate cancer. However, all organizations agree that men with questions or concerns should discuss the potential benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening with their physicians and make informed decisions.



Equal Access Fund

Financial support is available for prostate cancer screenings if you are not insured or underinsured. Reach out to the Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre at www.cancer.bm.



Don't Get Stung This Summer!

A PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR CAN FLOAT UP TO 6 INCHES ABOVE THE SURFACE OF THE OCEAN. On its bottom, feeding tentacles can reach up to 60 feet. They feature specialized stinging cells called nematocysts, used for capturing small fish. These tentacles provide an extremely painful sting to humans.

In the water, a Portuguese man-of-war can resemble foam from a wave and thus be hard to see in the surf. Before entering the water, see if many of them have washed up on the beach. That is a sign they may be in the water.

On land, remember that even one that is dried out still has highly venomous stinging cells. Take care not to step on one and do not touch the tentacles.

If you are stung, seek the aid of a lifeguard, if possible, as they are trained to help with stings. If the sting is severe, seek medical assistance.

To care for a sting yourself, remove any visible tentacles. Wear gloves or use a driver's license or credit card to scrape them off. Rinse the affected area with seawater. Do not use fresh water! Fresh water will cause any stinging cells that haven't fired (called nematocysts) to do so and release their venom, possibly worsening the situation.

The sting can cause burning or rash streaks that itch. For itching, try over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream or antihistamine tablets. If the sting is severe, seek medical assistance.



health hint



Tell Mosquitoes to Buzz Off

MOSQUITOES CAN FLY IN THE FACE OF YOUR SUMMER FUN. Ways to stop mosquitoes from bugging you—and to keep the mosquito population low—include the following:

- Avoid being outside during mosquito “feast time” at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. Also beware of shady, wooded areas at any time of day.
- Wear light-colored clothing so that you can see mosquitoes before they bite you. And wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outdoors.
- Get rid of standing water, where mosquitoes often breed. At least once a week, drain any water you find in birdbaths, buckets, flowerpots, children's pools, garbage cans, pet bowls, and other containers.
- Keep mosquitoes out of your house by installing screens on windows and doors or fixing torn screens.

health hint

HIV Prevention Is Still Important

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM HIV BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING how the virus is spread. The virus can be passed only in certain ways:

- During vaginal, anal, or oral sex with a person infected with HIV
- By sharing a contaminated needle, such as through illicit drug use
- To a baby during pregnancy or birth or through breast-feeding if the mother is infected with HIV
- Through a contaminated blood transfusion (rare)

Donated blood in Bermuda has long been tested for HIV and is considered very safe. Also, if a pregnant woman knows she is HIV-positive, her medical team can now take special steps to help prevent her baby from becoming infected.



To protect yourself, choose a lifestyle that keeps you at low risk for HIV. In general, do not have sex with people who have HIV or inject illegal drugs, with people who have had unprotected sex, or with multiple partners.



When You've Overdone the Sun ...

SO YOU SNOOZED UNDER THE CLEAR, BLUE SKY or just forgot to keep slathering on the sunscreen while you were walking around outdoors. And now, you're burned. Really fried, in fact. You have the telltale tender skin, itching, and pain of a sunburn. Blame it on the sun's superstrong—and damaging—ultraviolet (UV) rays.

Most sunburns are considered first- or second-degree burns. First-degree sunburns are pink in color and typically don't blister, while second-degree burns usually range from pink to bright red and may blister.

Most of the time, you can treat sunburns—even the painful ones—at home. This includes first-degree and minor second-degree sunburns.



Here are some hot tips for soothing a sunburn:

- Run cool water over the sunburned area for 10 minutes. This may temporarily relieve pain and reduce swelling. Or take a cold bath. Cool, wet compresses can also be applied to the sunburned area as often as needed. However, don't use ice on a burn.
- Soothe the pain and itching with over-the-counter products that contain the following ingredients: dyclonine, pramoxine, benzyl alcohol, or menthol. Sprays can be a good choice because they are less painful to apply than products that you rub on. Take a nonprescription pain reliever, such as acetaminophen, to help relieve a painful sunburn.
- If pain isn't a problem, but your skin feels dry, gently rub cocoa butter, glycerin, or petroleum jelly on the burn. You can do this as often as needed.

Call your doctor if your sunburn worsens or does not improve within a week. Also, you should see your doctor if your symptoms include fever, chills, nausea, and an upset stomach.



Make a Plan with Wellness Matters!

Plot your healthcare strategy with BF&M's free one-stop portal exclusively for health insurance members, Wellness Matters! Start with www.bfm.bm and click links to:

- Gain insight with "Interactive Tools."
- Take a Health Risk Assessment.
- Search the Drug Reference Guide.
- Test your breast cancer knowledge.
- Get breaking health news in one place.
- Analyse your understanding of stress.
- Benefit from tips on physical fitness.
- Reduce risk for cardiovascular disease.
- Get proactive against diabetes.
- Start cooking with healthy recipes.

health hint

You Can Help: Donate Blood


If you need it, there's no substitute for human blood.

The need for a blood transfusion can arise from surgery, serious accidents, natural disasters, organ transplants, cancer therapies, or sickle-cell anemia.

Five levels of security are part of the strict donor screening and safety regulations that apply to the testing, storage, and transportation of blood. These cover screening donors, barring unsuitable donors, testing donated blood, quarantining donated blood until screening test results are in, and monitoring and investigating all problems that arise in the donation and transfusion process.

Individuals who wish to donate blood must:

- Be at least 16 years old and in good health
- Be free from infection and serious illness
- Have normal blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and hemoglobin (a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen)
- Have not donated whole blood in the past 56 days

 Do it today! Schedule your appointment with the Bermuda Blood Donor Centre. Call 236-5067.

Blood Donation Facts

Each year, more than **2,000** units of blood are used by Bermuda hospitals. 

Red blood cells can be donated every **56 days**, but their shelf life is only **42 days**.

1 pint  of blood can **save 3 lives**. 

Actual donation process takes **15 minutes**.  Total commitment is **1 hour**.

Average adult has **10 pints** of blood in his or her body. **1 pint** is given during donation.



Source: Bermuda Hospitals Board; American Red Cross

Spotlight on Summer Food Safety

Picnics, barbecues, and poolside parties are part of summer fun. While warmer weather is ideal for outdoor gatherings, it also offers the perfect environment for bacteria to multiply in food—especially when you're cooking and eating away from the kitchen.

GOOD PRACTICES PAY OFF

Much of the time, such food-related infections can be prevented by following these food safety precautions.

- Uncooked meat, poultry, and seafood are often loaded with bacteria. Keep uncooked meats refrigerated and securely wrapped in plastic bags and away from other foods. Thaw or marinate them in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw foods.
- Check that they're cooked to a safe temperature with a food thermometer.
- Don't put cooked food back on the same plate that held raw food unless you've washed it first.
- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling raw foods.
- Use clean cutting boards, utensils, dishes, and countertops, and wash after each food-prep task.

HOW TO KEEP BACTERIA IN CHECK

Buy unblemished fruits and vegetables, and refrigerate perishable produce. To reduce bacteria, rinse under running water, and cut away any areas that are damaged or bruised. Dry with a paper towel or clean cloth.

To prevent bacteria from growing in food, refrigerate or use ice or gel packs in coolers to keep cold foods 40 degrees or below. Keep hot foods at 140 degrees or higher. Don't let food sit out for more than two hours—cut that time in half if the air temperature is more than 90 degrees.



Resources for Action

Is your interest spiked by a health topic? Start your journey with these resources, or visit the "BF&M Resources Guide" section of our Online Wellness Centre at www.bfm.bm.

Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre
46 Point Finger Rd.
Paget DV04
232-2247 for Cancer Information Service
www.cancer.bm

Nutritional Services
67 Victoria Street
Hamilton HM 12
278-6468 or 278-6469

Skin Cancer Assessment and Dermatology
Deborah J. Daly, D.O.
Woodbourne Hall
1 Gorham Road
Pembroke HM 08
295-2222

Blood Donor Centre
Please call for an appointment.
236-5067

www.bfm.bm

BF&M Overseas Healthcare Toll-Free Helpline


BF&M Medical Assistance is available 24/7 with our toll-free numbers:

- 1-888-674-1367
(from Bermuda)
- 1-877-236-2338
(from outside Bermuda)
- 1-519-251-5186
(from Bermuda collect calls)
- 1-519-251-5185
(from outside Bermuda: collect calls)

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