



Patient Diagnosis Resource for PROSTATE CANCER, GLEASON SCORE 5

Your Diagnosis

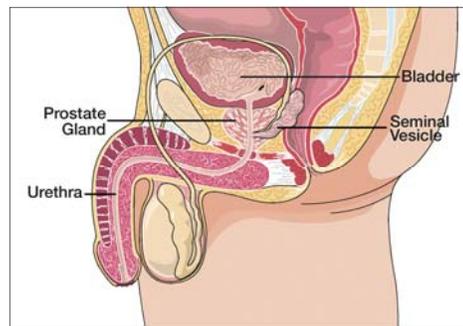
After completing a thorough lab analysis of your recent prostate biopsy, a specialized doctor called a pathologist reported a diagnosis of prostate cancer, Gleason score 5. To determine how fast the cancer may grow and spread, your cells were compared to normal prostate cells using the Gleason system, the most common prostate cancer grading method. Gleason scores range from 2 to 10.

Gleason scores 2 to 4 designate the least aggressive cancers. Intermediate-grade cancers have Gleason scores of 5 and 6 and can be either slow- or fast-growing. Gleason score 7 indicates moderately aggressive cancer. Cancers with Gleason scores of 8 to 10 are highly aggressive.

About the Condition

The prostate gland is typically the size of a walnut, located below the bladder and in front of the rectum in men. It surrounds a portion of the urethra, or tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body. Its main purpose is to produce fluid for semen, which transports sperm.

Cancer occurs when cells in the prostate do not develop and die in their normal manner. The extra cells that result form a growth, or tumor, which can be benign or malignant. Benign tumors are not cancer and do not spread throughout the body. Malignant tumors are cancer. Their cells may invade and damage surrounding areas or spread to other locations in the body (metastasize).



Men over the age of 45 are at the greatest risk for prostate cancer, which is the second most common cancer in men after skin cancer. A man's chance of getting prostate cancer is increased when he has a family history of the condition, especially in his father or brother. However, no one truly knows why some men develop the condition and others do not.

Prostate cancer usually grows at a slow pace, but the most aggressive types can develop and metastasize quickly. Your doctor may want to perform one or more tests to help determine if the cancer has spread, which could include the following:

- ◆ MRI Scan
- ◆ Ultrasound
- ◆ Lymph Node Biopsy
- ◆ X-ray
- ◆ CT Scan
- ◆ Bone Scan

Cancer that is located only within the prostate gland is the most manageable and curable. If malignant prostate cells are found beyond the prostate in the seminal vesicles, lymph nodes or other areas of the body, the treatment plan will be more complex and the cancer may not be curable. Many treatment options are available for patients with incurable prostate cancer to help minimize pain and improve quality of life.

Treatment Options

Deciding on a treatment plan for your prostate cancer can be complex and depend upon a variety of factors, such as your Gleason score, age, general health condition and personal preferences. The following treatment possibilities are available for prostate cancer:

Watchful Waiting – Some patients decide not to pursue active therapy for their cancer, but rather adopt a “watch and wait” tactic. This choice is often appropriate for older men with small, low-grade tumors that are confined to the prostate. By taking this approach, the side effects of standard prostate cancer treatments are avoided.

Surgery – Removal of the entire prostate gland to rid it of cancer, called radical prostatectomy, is a common way to treat prostate cancer. Surrounding tissues and nearby lymph nodes may also be removed during the procedure.

Cryosurgery – Cryosurgery uses super-cooled gas to freeze and kill prostate cancer cells.

Radiation Therapy – Another common prostate cancer treatment is radiation therapy, which can be delivered externally or internally. In external beam radiation, a high energy X-ray machine is used to direct radiation at the tumor. Internal radiation therapy, or brachytherapy, destroys cancer cells with small radioactive pellets that are implanted directly into the prostate.

Hormone Therapy – Prostate cancer cells need male hormones, or androgens, such as testosterone to grow. Hormone therapy helps cancer shrink and grow more slowly by keeping the malignant cells from getting androgens. Methods used include drugs to block the production and effect of androgens and removal of the testicles, the main site of testosterone production.

Chemotherapy – The use of anti-cancer drugs, or chemotherapy, provides a way to slow tumor growth and reduce pain for patients whose cancer has spread outside of the prostate and is unresponsive to hormone therapy.

You may also consider participating in clinical trials. These investigative studies help doctors learn about new treatments and better ways to use established treatments. Talk with your doctor about the possibility of taking part in a clinical trial in your area.

What You Can Do

You can choose to take an active role in your health and well-being. Learn as much as you can about your condition and have a list of questions ready each time you meet with your doctor. Join a support group of other men with prostate cancer, and talk with your family, friends, clergy person or counselor as you feel comfortable. Also, be sure to get enough sleep and eat healthy foods every day.

Additional Resources

American Cancer Society, 800.227.2345, www.cancer.org
National Cancer Institute, 800.422.6237, www.cancer.gov

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