

Greenwich Hospital

What is Prostatitis?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is Prostatitis?

Prostatitis is an inflammation of the prostate. The prostate is a small organ about the size of a walnut that is found below the male urinary bladder and surrounds the tube that empties urine out of the body (urethra). Prostatitis is a common disorder in men and it occurs more frequently in young and middle-aged adult males.

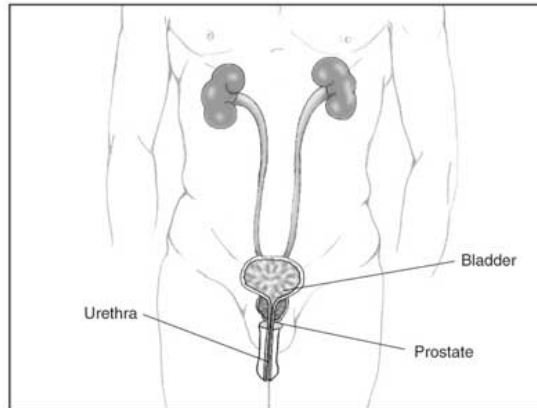


Image source: National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse

What are the symptoms of prostatitis?

Your symptoms may vary. Common symptoms associated with prostatitis include:

- A burning sensation upon urination
- Frequency and urgency of urination
- Fever
- Chills
- Pain in the lower back and/or genital area
- Or, you may have no symptoms.

What causes prostatitis?

Prostatitis is associated with four main conditions:

- *Acute bacterial prostatitis*, which is caused by a bacterial infection. This is the least common form of prostatitis, but the easiest to treat. This is normally diagnosed through evaluating a health history of prostatitis symptoms and through examining a urine sample for the presence of bacteria and white blood cells in the urine.

- *Chronic bacterial prostatitis*, which is also caused by a bacterial infection. This is also associated with an underlying defect in the prostate which predisposes the man to continual bacterial infections. This form of prostatitis is also less common and diagnosed by the presence of bacteria in the urine and identification of an anatomical defect in the prostate.
- *Chronic prostatitis*, which is the most common form but most difficult to treat. With this form of prostatitis, symptoms come and go without warning, and there may or may not be inflammation. This is diagnosed through evaluating a health history of prostatitis symptoms and through taking a urine sample. With chronic prostatitis, there is no presence of bacteria in the urine, but there may be white blood cells.
- *Asymptomatic inflammatory prostatitis*, which does not present with the usual symptoms of prostatitis. This is usually diagnosed when doctors take a urine specimen for other reasons, such as a physical exam or infertility testing. With this form of prostatitis, there are no accompanying symptoms and there are white blood cells present in the urine.

How is prostatitis treated?

- *Acute bacterial prostatitis* is treated with an antibiotic that your doctor orders appropriate to your infection.
- *Chronic bacterial prostatitis* is treated through identifying and removing the defect and then by treating the infection with antibiotics.
- *Chronic prostatitis* is not caused by bacteria, so antibiotics will not help. Generally, you will need to work with your doctor to find a treatment that is good for you. Avoiding substances that may irritate the bladder, such as alcohol, caffeine, citrus foods and hot spicy foods is sometimes helpful. Drinking 8 to 12 glasses of water each day promotes frequent urination which helps flush out the urinary tract system. Increasing dietary fiber to prevent constipation can also help relieve symptoms. Taking warm baths help some individuals. Your doctor may also prescribe medication that relaxes the muscle tissue in the prostate.

Sources: National Institute on Aging. (2002). Retrieved June 2005 from www.niapublications.org
National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse. (2000). Retrieved June 2005 from <http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov>

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