

Transcript

Treating Prostate Cancer

Host: Treatments for prostate cancer keep getting better. So if you're diagnosed with it, talk to your doctor. Together you can create a treatment plan just for you.

Dr. Paul Kneopfmacher: Based on the severity of your cancer, your doctor may refer you to a urologist or a cancer specialist called an oncologist. Together they will form a treatment plan for you. We'll talk about the main categories of treatment and you can pause at any time to take notes.

The first type of treatment is called "Watchful Waiting". This means you and your doctor will watch the progress of the cancer, testing often to make sure it isn't growing and spreading. This option is usually used for early stage cancers or for patients who are elderly or too sick to undergo other forms of treatment.

Next there are two type of radiation therapy. The first is called "External Beam Radiation" and it uses radioactive beams to kill the cancer cells. For this type of treatment the doctor will use a machine to direct X-rays into your prostate.

Another method of radiation therapy is called "Seed Implants". Your doctor will place several radioactive "seeds" about the size of a grain of rice in your prostate. These seeds generate higher doses of radiation than the external beam method and over a longer period of time. The radiation usually "runs out" in about a year and there is no need to remove them. This type of radiation therapy is used for low-grade prostate cancer.

Cancer cells in the prostate respond to testosterone by growing. Hormone therapy works by regulating the amount of testosterone in the body. This therapy is generally used for people with advanced prostate cancer; or, it can be used to shrink a cancer before radiation or surgery. This therapy will not eliminate cancer but it can keep it from growing and spreading in your body.

Finally, surgery can be performed to remove the prostate gland entirely. Your surgeon will make every attempt to spare the nerves and muscles involved in urination and sexual functioning, while clearing all the cancer from the body.

All of these treatment options can cause side effects including bladder and rectal problems, sexual problems -- including erectile dysfunction -- and changes in your body such as reduced muscle and bone mass. But many of these side effects can be treated successfully.

While there's no foolproof way to prevent prostate cancer, research suggests that healthy living can lower your chances of developing it. Exercise helps boost the immune system and improves circulation and helps digestion. It also helps prevent

obesity, which is a risk factor for prostate cancer. A diet low in fat may also help. High-fat diets have been linked with prostate cancer. Foods high in antioxidant lycopene like tomatoes, grapefruit and watermelon may help lower your risk as well. Soy products that contain isoflavones can also by keeping testosterone in check. And finally, if you are diagnosed with prostate cancer, remember that every year many men go on to beat this disease and live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Host: Prostate cancer is very common so no one should be embarrassed about getting checked routinely or undergoing the available treatments. Seeking support from family, loved ones or cancer support groups can be very helpful, too. Thanks for being part of the *healthination*. Be sure to watch other segments and take control of your health.