

The Pain of Prostatitis

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Prostatitis

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Prostatitis causes discomfort during urination and sex but can be treated quickly and easily.

The prostate, a walnut-sized gland located right below a man's bladder, produces some of the fluid contained in semen and is partially responsible for moving semen through the urethra during ejaculation. One common dysfunction of the prostate is prostatitis, or the inflammation and swelling of the prostate gland.

While prostatitis affects men in all age groups, it's more common in males 50 years old and younger. Men with prostatitis may experience pain while urinating or ejaculating, along with flu-like symptoms and extreme tenderness in the groin area.

Prostatitis manifests in one of four types:

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Prostatitis manifests in one of four types:

1. **Acute bacterial prostatitis** is a relatively rare form that develops rapidly. It may occur in conjunction with a urinary tract infection and sometimes will lead to more frequent, urgent and/or painful urination. Antibiotics typically eliminate the problem in two to four weeks.
2. **Asymptomatic inflammatory prostatitis** may go unnoticed unless a doctor discovers it while testing for prostate health. Since this form presents no symptoms, treatment typically isn't needed.
3. **Chronic bacterial prostatitis** occurs repeatedly and more gradually than acute bacterial prostatitis. Antibiotics are effective in 60 to 80 percent of men with this form of prostatitis.
4. **Chronic nonbacterial prostatitis** is also referred to as chronic pelvic pain syndrome. This is the most common yet least understood form of prostatitis. Antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and alpha-blockers are most often used for treatment.

Causes of prostatitis

Prostatitis is often, but not always, caused by an infection. When caused by a bacterial infection, a full round of antibiotics usually solves the problem.

The root of the infection is commonly the leakage of infected urine into the prostate gland. Nerve damage inside the lower urinary tract, as a result of trauma or surgery, may also trigger prostatitis.

Depending on its origin, prostatitis can develop rapidly or slowly. Improvement happens much the same way: The condition may clear up by itself, or it may last for months and even return after subsiding.

Symptoms & risk factors

The signs of prostatitis include pain or a burning sensation while urinating, as well as issues with the urination stream, such as hesitation, frequency or dribbling. Note the condition of urine, which might appear bloody or have traces of blood. Nocturia, which is excessive urination during the night, may also occur.

Prostatitis may cause men to experience pain in the groin, pelvic or genital area, and potentially the lower back and abdomen.

Certain factors put men at higher risk of recurrent prostate infections, such as having unprotected sex or already having contracted a sexually transmitted infection or disease. Nonbacterial prostatitis is more common among older men.

Once a man has contracted prostatitis, his chances of getting it again are higher. Pelvic trauma and bladder or urethra infections also increase the chances of getting prostatitis.

Living with prostatitis

Men often believe they need to avoid sexual activity if they have prostatitis, but this isn't necessarily true. Prostatitis might make ejaculation painful and sex difficult to enjoy, but the act itself isn't likely to worsen the condition. It's also unlikely that the bacterial infection will be passed on to a partner during sex.

Worth noting, though, is that studies have found any condition that affects the lower urinary tract, including prostatitis, can lead to sexual dysfunction.

Because prostatitis is so common, men should be aware of its symptoms and potential complications, along with their potential risk factors. If you feel pain during urination or ejaculation, it's time to see a doctor. Timely treatment prevents the infection from getting worse and improves successful outcomes.

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UTIs

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