

## PROSTATE CANCER FACT SHEET

### What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is a cancer that starts in the prostate gland, a small gland found only in men. The prostate is part of the male reproductive system. Many prostate cancers grow slowly, but some can spread to other parts of the body if not detected and treated early.

### Prostate Cancer in Sri Lanka and Worldwide

According to the National Cancer Control Programme of Sri Lanka, prostate cancer is one of the common cancers among men in Sri Lanka. In 2022, 1,226 new prostate cancer cases were reported in Sri Lanka. The age-standardized incidence rate was 11.1 per 100,000 male population. Worldwide, prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men, especially older men.

### Risk Factors

#### Modifiable Risk Factors

Increasing age (especially above 50 years)

#### Family history

- Having a first-degree relative (father, brother) with prostate cancer increases risk.
- Risk is higher if multiple relatives are affected or if diagnosed at a younger age.

#### Genetic factors

- Mutations in genes such as **BRCA1**, **BRCA2**, and **HOXB13** are associated with increased risk.
- Men with hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndromes may have higher prostate cancer risk.

#### Non-modifiable Risk Factors

- Obesity and lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet high in processed and fatty foods
- Smoking

#### Hormonal factors

- Androgens (especially testosterone and dihydrotestosterone) play a role in prostate growth and carcinogenesis



## **Prevention**

Although not all prostate cancers can be prevented, the following healthy lifestyle practices may reduce risk:

- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Reduce processed meat and high-fat food intake
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Attend medical check-ups regularly

## **Early Detection**

There is no single screening programme for prostate cancer in Sri Lanka at present. However, men with symptoms or high-risk individuals should seek medical advice early.

Doctors may recommend:

- PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) blood test
- Digital Rectal Examination (DRE)

Further tests if abnormalities are found

## **Signs and Symptoms**

Early prostate cancer may not cause symptoms. Possible symptoms include:

- Difficulty passing urine
- Weak urine stream
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Blood in urine or semen
- Pain during urination
- Pain in the back, hips, or pelvis
- Unexplained weight loss

## **Diagnosis**

Doctors may use several tests to diagnose prostate cancer:

- Medical history and physical examination, along with Digital Rectal Examination (DRE)
- PSA blood test
- Ultrasound or CT scan/ MRI scan
- Prostate biopsy
- Bone scan to see whether cancer has spread



## **Treatment**

Treatment depends on the stage of cancer, age, and general health.

### **Common treatment methods include:**

- Active surveillance for slow-growing cancers
- Surgery to remove the prostate
- Radiotherapy
- Hormone therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted therapy in selected patients
- Palliative care for symptom control and quality of life

## **Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation helps patients return to daily life after treatment.

### **Services may include:**

- Physiotherapy
- Nutritional advice
- Urinary continence support
- Sexual health counselling
- Psychological and emotional support

## **Palliative Care**

Palliative care improves the quality of life for patients and families facing serious illness. Palliative care can be given together with cancer treatment.

## **Survivorship**

Many men live long lives after prostate cancer treatment.

Follow-up care is important to:

- Monitor for recurrence
- Manage treatment side effects
- Maintain physical and mental well-being
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits

## **Services Available in Sri Lanka**

- Surgical clinics in Government Hospitals
- Cancer treatment centres including National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka (Apeksha Hospital)
- Palliative care and rehabilitation services at selected hospitals



## When Should You Seek Medical Advice?

Seek medical advice if you:

- Have urinary symptoms
- Notice blood in urine
- Have persistent bone pain
- Have a strong family history of prostate cancer
- Are over 50 years old and concerned about prostate health

## Contact Details

**Address:** National Cancer Control Programme,  
555/5, Public Health Complex, Elvitigala Mawatha,  
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