

Critical Facts About Prostate Cancer

Learn more about the third most common cancer among men in Singapore and how you can treat it



Dr Sam Peh is an experienced consultant urologist from Surgi-TEN Specialists.
PHOTO: SURGI-TEN SPECIALISTS

BY SAM PEH

The prostate is a gland slightly larger than the size of a walnut and located between the penis and bladder. As the third most common cancer among men in Singapore, prostate cancer occurs when there is uncontrolled growth of prostate glandular cells in the prostate. In its early

stages, prostate cancer is usually localised (within the prostate), but can spread to other organs if left untreated.

Who is at risk?

Men above the age of 50 or with a family history of prostate cancer are at higher risk of

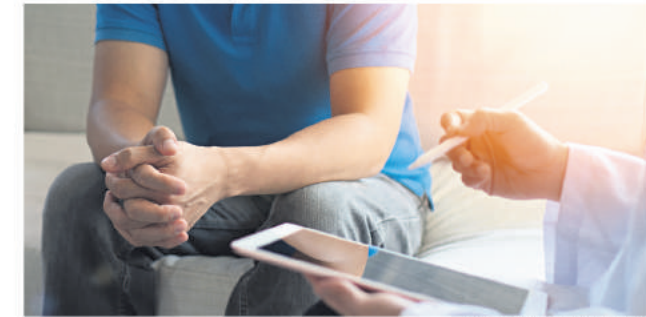


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contracting this disease.

Prostate screening

Early-stage prostate cancer often does not present any symptoms. The only way to detect this is through prostate screening which requires a blood test to measure the amount of prostate-specific antigen (PSA). PSA is a protein produced by both cancerous and non-cancerous tissue in the prostate.

However, PSA itself is not a foolproof marker for prostate cancer. The PSA can be high in conditions such as an enlarged prostate (benign prostate hyperplasia) or when there is a prostate infection (prostatitis). Even so, men who are at higher risk should go for a prostate screening at least once a year.

Treatment options

The treatment of prostate cancer depends on the grade and stage of the cancer. Some low-grade early-stage prostate cancers are very slow-growing and may not be a threat to the patient's life. In low-grade early-stage prostate cancer, monitoring the PSA or active surveillance is an option. Another option for this group of patients is the high intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) treatment, which is available at Farrer Park Hospital. This is a non-surgical, single treatment day-surgery procedure that allows preservation of urinary continence, erectile as well as ejaculatory functions. For high-grade early-stage prostate cancer, it is traditionally treated with robotic surgery or radiation therapy. In prostate cancer that has spread beyond the prostate, the treatment can be through hormone therapy or chemotherapy.

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Focal Therapy for Prostate Cancer

A Day-Surgery Treatment Backed by Technology

Dr. Chong Kian Tai, Consultant Urologist, Surgi-TEN Specialists



Photo: Farrer Park Hospital

fective resulting in better outcome.

Day-Surgery Procedure

Focal therapy using Focal One HIFU machine is a day-surgery procedure that is performed by certified and experienced urologists. It is done under general anesthesia and lasts between 30 minutes and 2 hours, depending on the areas and amount of prostate cancer. There are no surgical cuts or radiation during the procedure. Many patients can even go home on the same day.

"After treatment, most patients will have a bit of discomfort when they pass urine, and some blood in the urine due to the treatment's effects. But generally, most patients will recover after 2 to 4 weeks," Dr. Chong explained.

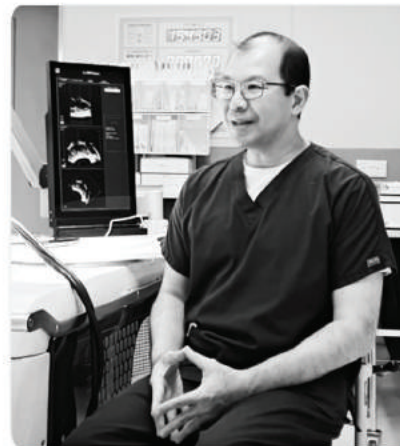


Photo: Farrer Park Hospital

urine incontinence after the treatment. For the minority of patients who relapses, focal therapy can be repeated in selected patients, or they may opt for surgery or radiotherapy.

Considerations about Focal Therapy for Prostate Cancer

Important factors to consider before focal therapy are: prostate cancer stage, area and volume of tumour. It is usually more suitable for Stage 1 and Stage 2 prostate cancer that is still within the prostate for better treatment outcome.

"Whether it is active surveillance, robotic surgery, radiotherapy or focal therapy, discuss how to treat your early-stage prostate cancer with your specialist first," Dr. Chong advised.

Treatment Outcome

According to medium-term studies, 80 to 90 percent of recovered patients remain cancer-free in the next 5 years. More than 95 percent of patients also do not have



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