

Bitesize Guide to:



Prostatitis

Most men will develop prostatitis at some point during their life. It can not only have a serious impact on your quality of life, but also in some cases become a medical emergency. Therefore, it is important to know the symptoms of prostatitis so that necessary treatment can be sought as quickly as possible. This is our bitesize guide to the condition.

What is it?

Prostatitis is the inflammation of the prostate. The prostate is a walnut-sized gland found in men. It lies between the penis and the bladder and wraps around the urethra (the tube that takes urine from out of the body). Prostatitis causes pain and swelling of the prostate gland, and can make urination both difficult and uncomfortable.

There are three main types of prostatitis:

- Acute prostatitis - an infection of the prostate, symptoms come and go quickly. A rare but potentially serious form of the condition
- Chronic bacterial prostatitis - a persistent infection of the prostate, symptoms flare up over long periods of time
- Chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CPPS) - similar to chronic bacterial prostatitis, but the cause is unknown

Who gets it?

Prostatitis can affect men of all ages but is most common in men between the ages of 30-50.

Why does it happen?

Bacteria that have travelled up the urethra to infect the prostate are the typical source of acute and chronic bacterial prostatitis. The cause of chronic prostatitis (CPPS) is unclear, although some studies have linked it to high levels of stress or depression.

Diagnosing Prostatitis

You should visit your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Pain in the lower back, thighs, stomach, and groin
- Pain in your penis, testicles, scrotum, or the area between the anus and scrotum
- A burning sensation during urination
- A frequent need to urinate
- Discomfort during or after ejaculation
- Feeling feverish

There is no single, specific test for diagnosing prostatitis, so the results of several tests are used to reach a diagnosis. Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms, and will then examine your abdomen and the area around your genitals. They may perform a rectal examination to feel whether your prostate is swollen. A urine test is performed to check for infection. Blood tests help to rule out any other problems with the prostate. An ultrasound scan may be taken to examine the health of your kidneys.

If your doctor suspects chronic prostatitis, they may refer you to a hospital specialist.

Treating Prostatitis

If the prostatitis has been caused by a bacterial infection, antibiotics will be prescribed for 4-6 week period. Painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can also be taken to relieve symptoms. If the symptoms are severe, stronger painkillers can be prescribed. If you are having difficulty urinating, the doctor may prescribe alpha-blockers. These relax your muscles, making urination easier.

With chronic prostatitis (CPPS), the aim of treatment is to manage, rather than cure, your symptoms. Treatment options include medication, prostate massage, and surgery.

4 Key Facts about Prostatitis

1. Bacterial infection can occur if your bladder does not empty properly, or if you use a catheter.
2. If your symptoms accelerate rapidly, it is important to go to a doctor straight away as you may have acute prostatitis.
3. Acute prostatitis may need to be treated in the hospital.
4. Some people with prostatitis find lifestyle changes and relaxation techniques help reduce their symptoms. These include exercising, doing pelvic floor exercises, or trying medication or yoga.

If you think you may suffer from prostatitis, speak to your healthcare professional.

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