

Prostate cancer prevention: What you can do

STAR HEALTH DESK

There is no sure way to prevent prostate cancer — but you can make some choices that might help. Prostate cancer is complicated, and researchers are still trying to understand the full range of factors that cause it — and determine which prevention strategies are safe and most effective.

Experts know that diet and lifestyle choices play a part in prostate cancer risk. Some medications and supplements also show promise in preventing prostate cancer, but more research is needed in this area.

While any man can get prostate cancer, it is most common in older men, men with a family history of prostate cancer. While age, genetics and race are factors you cannot change, there are some factors you can control. Here are a few things that you can do to help lower your risk of prostate cancer — and a few things that are still not proved, but might help. These steps may also help prevent other cancers

and health conditions such as heart disease.

Nutrition and preventing prostate cancer

So far, research does not support definite nutritional guidelines for preventing prostate cancer. However, you can reasonably act on these suggestions:

Don't overeat: Eat moderate-sized portions and keep your calories under control.

Avoid high-fat foods: Prostate cancer rates vary greatly from one country to another, with the highest rates appearing in countries where people tend to eat a lot of fat. A diet high in saturated fats (such as animal fats found in red meat) may pose the greatest risk.

Make healthy choices: Choose whole-grain foods, such as brown rice and whole-wheat bread. Limit sweets and salt.

Drink alcohol in moderation: Generally, this means no more than two drinks a day for men.

Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables: A diet high in fruits and vegetables has been linked to a lower risk of various kinds of cancer. Recent studies cast doubt



Prostate cancer is very common among aged male, while many men live with it for years

on the theory that lycopene — an antioxidant found in tomatoes — lowers prostate cancer risk. But don't stop eating tomatoes. Eating plenty of all kinds of vegetables, including tomatoes, may help ward off prostate cancer and other cancers.

Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids: While a diet high in most kinds of fat is linked to a higher risk of cancer and other

health problems, there is an exception. Omega-3 fatty acids — a type of fat found in cold-water fish appear to reduce the risk of certain cancers.

Experts are still studying other foods to see whether they help prevent prostate cancer. While the verdict is still out, eating more of these foods probably will not hurt — and may help prevent cancer and other health problems:

Eat soy products and legumes: Soybeans and other legumes contain phytoestrogens, which are plant-based chemicals that behave like the hormone estrogen in the human body. These chemicals might help to prevent prostate cancer. In fact, one possible explanation for lower rates of prostate cancer in Asian men is that they eat more soy protein.

Drink green tea: Green tea contains antioxidants such as polyphenols that may help prevent certain cancers and other health problems.

Obesity and prostate cancer Researchers have not established a direct link between obesity and incidence of prostate cancer. However, obesity might affect levels of hormones related to prostate cancer risk. Strategies for preventing obesity include:

- Following guidelines for a healthy diet
- Meeting with a physician to develop a plan for physical activity
- Doing some form of aerobic exercise for 30 minutes or more daily

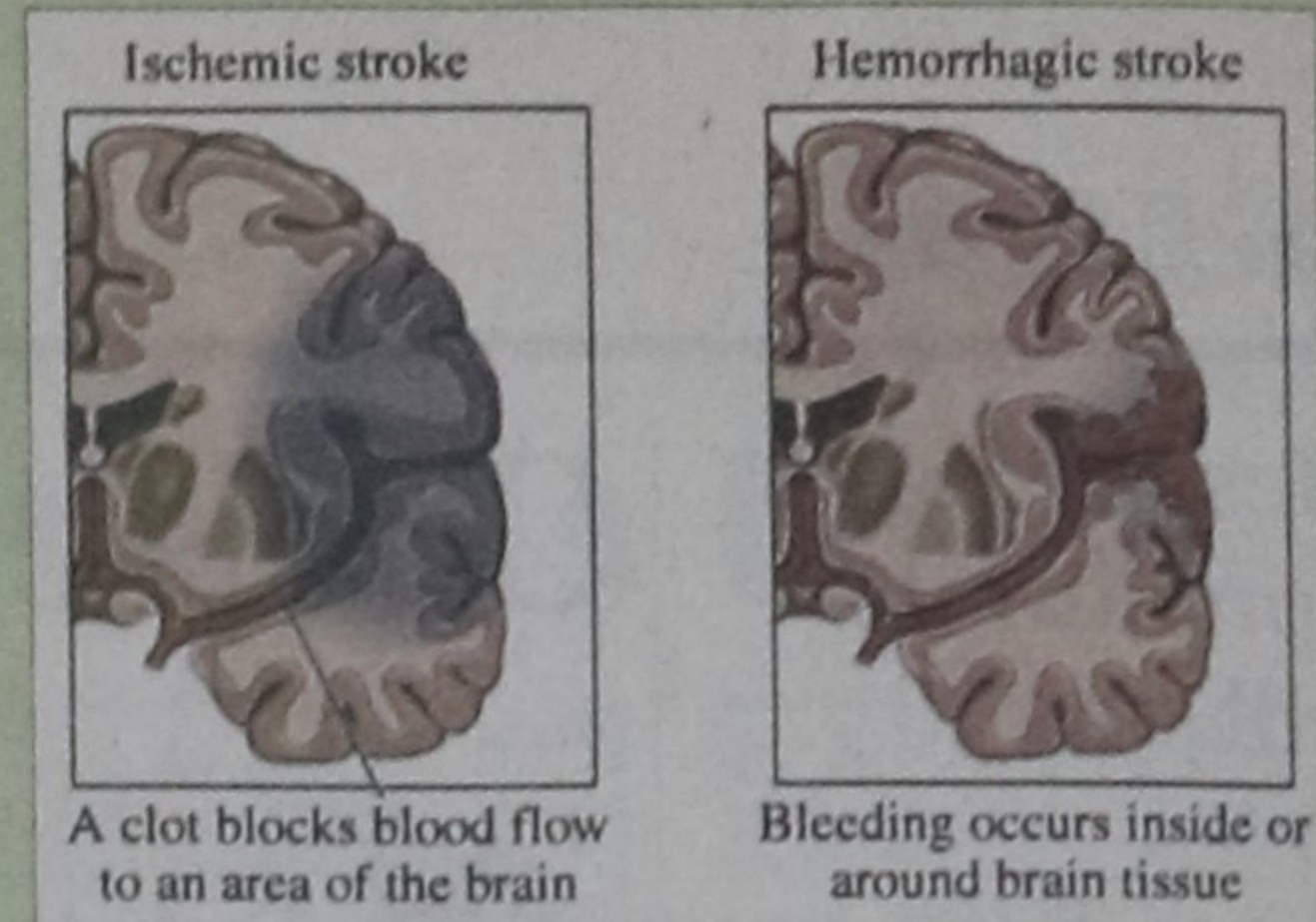
Prostate cancer risk: A common-sense perspective

Prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in men, exceeded only by lung cancer. Even so, prostate cancer affects far more men than it eventually kills.

Prostate cancer progresses more slowly than many other types of cancer. Many men live with it for years. Many survive disease-free after treatment. And others refrain from treatment while closely monitoring the cancer's progression — an approach known as "watchful waiting."

To keep your risks in perspective, stay in regular contact with your doctor about your prostate health. Ask about prevention strategies that make the most sense for you, given your current health and medical history. An annual prostate checkup cannot reduce your risk of cancer, as perhaps a healthy diet and exercise can.

Like any other cancers, diagnosis at an earlier stage and treatment thereafter is most effective.



STROKE

Remember the first three letters — S T R

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

During a weekend afternoon gathering, Mr Jalil (not a real name) stumbled and took a little fall. After a while, he assured everyone that he was ok. The host offered calling an ambulance or a doctor. But he denied saying that it was of no need. They got him cleaned up and got him a new plate of food. While he appeared a bit shaken up, he went about enjoying himself the rest of the afternoon. Eventually he had been taken to the hospital and passed away that evening.

He suffered from a stroke at the party. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps he would be managed properly. They end up in a vulnerable and discouraging condition instead.

While saying about stroke identification, Prof Dr Md Abdul Hayee, a renowned Neurologist says that if he can get on to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can reverse the effects of a stroke. He also said that the trick was getting a stroke recognised, diagnosed and then managing the patient medically within 3 hours.

Recognising a stroke

Remember the "three" steps — STR.

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognise the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognise a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S — Ask the individual to SMILE

T — TALK. Ask the person to speak a simple meaningful sentence e.g. What about the traffic or weather today?

R — Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call the ambulance and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

Well, another 'sign' of a stroke is, ask the person to 'stick out' his/her tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

The writer is a healthcare management specialist and Visiting Professor of North South University (NSU).

Health writers and communicators congregated at New Delhi

STAR HEALTH REPORT

More than 100 health journalists from print and electronic media from the SAARC region congregated at the First National Health Writers & Communicators Convention recently held at New Delhi, India.

The convention was organised

by HEAL (Health Essayist & Authors League) and inaugurated by the Honourable Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare of India Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss.

HEAL is a 'Health Writers' network of SAARC countries having its mission to improve the quality, accuracy and visibility of

health care reporting and writing and to provide educational resources that support the goal of achieving high standards of 'health awareness' in the society.

Swadeep Srivastava, Consulting Editor, HEAL India said, "Bringing together the health writer on one platform and initiating education programmes is the need of the time".

HEAL has come a long way since its inception in 2005 and has organised more than 15 health writers' workshops, informed Mr R Shankar, President of HEAL and former Resident Editor of The New Indian Express Group, Bangalore. "Today health writers play a crucial role in disseminating issues that go hand in hand with modern technology to present the latest findings to the layman in a language they understand" he added.



Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare of India Dr Anbumani Ramadoss is speaking at the inaugural ceremony of First National Health Writers & Communicators Convention organised by HEAL India.

Lifestyle change key for the success of obesity surgery

REUTERS HEALTH, New York

Anyone thinking about having weight loss surgery should be sure to do their homework beforehand, and must understand they need to dramatically change the way they eat for the surgery to be successful, advises the head of the U.S. government agency responsible for research on health care quality and patient safety.

"People who succeed and lose weight and keep it off eat very, very differently," Dr. Carolyn Clancy, director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in Rockville, Maryland, told. "Essentially, you've got to eat a whole lot less."

Clancy has written about the realities of operations to promote weight loss, known as bariatric surgery, in the latest issues of Nursing for Women's Health and Health for Women, both published by the Association of Women's Health, Obstet-

ric and Neonatal Nurses.

Bariatric surgery has skyrocketed in popularity, Clancy noted in an interview, but just a fraction of people who could benefit most from the surgery have gotten it. According to AHRQ, evidence for the procedure's benefits is strongest for people with body mass indexes (BMIs) of 40 or higher, or individuals with BMIs of 35 or greater who have a serious medical condition, such as diabetes or severe sleep apnea.

Nevertheless, she added, the surgery "is not risk free, and I think it's really important for all people, women and men, to know about the risks and to be very clear about what they're getting into."

For example, Clancy said, 7 percent of people who undergo the surgery need to be hospitalised for complications. Four out of 10 will develop complications within 6 months of the surgery. These complications

include nausea, cramps and vomiting due to overeating.

People should also seek out a surgeon and health care team they can communicate with effectively, because post-surgical follow-up care is just as important as the procedure itself, Clancy added. If you don't "click," or you feel your surgeon isn't hearing your concerns, she advised, look elsewhere.

People may want to seek out bariatric surgery programmes designated as Centers of Excellence by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (<http://www.asbs.org/>), Clancy suggested.

Finally, she said, people need to find out before having the surgery whether or not their insurer covers it. Some will require documentation that a person has made a serious effort to lose weight by other means before they will pay for the procedure.

Source: Nursing for Women's Health

UPCOMING EVENT

World Malaria Day | 25 April

Malaria continues to haunt 40% of the world's population. It infects more than 500 million people per year and kills more than 1 million. The burden of malaria is heaviest in sub-Saharan Africa but the disease also afflicts Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and even parts of Europe.

It is an opportunity for countries in the affected regions to learn from each other's experiences and support each other's efforts; for new donors to join a global partnership against malaria; for research and academic institutions to flag their scientific advances to both experts and general

public; and for international partners, companies and foundations to showcase their efforts and reflect on how to scale up what has worked.

World Malaria Day - which was instituted by the World Health Assembly at its 60th session in May 2007 - is a day for recognising the global effort to provide effective control of malaria.

On this year's World Malaria Day, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership - which includes WHO - will focus on malaria as a global health problem. The partners will engage the international community in their fight against malaria.

Novo Nordisk wins Medical Design Excellence Award

Novo Nordisk, a leading healthcare company for diabetes care has been awarded Medical Design Excellence Award 2008 for its product NovoFine® Autocover® needle, says a press release.

It is a special insulin injecting needle, which reduces needle prick injuries and gives ease to the patients who fear the needle most.

About 10 percent diabetic patients have needle anxiety which leads them to avoid injections.

The new product also helps avoid serious infections. It is designed in such way that needle is concealed during injection and patients' compliance is much better than conventional tools.

Beacon Pharma launched safe IV Iron "Xenofer"

A new drug for intravenous (IV) iron therapy named "Xenofer" has been launched recently by Beacon Pharmaceuticals Ltd., says a press release.

To mark the event, a scientific seminar was held concomitantly at a local hotel in the city. The seminar was on "Role of intravenous (IV) iron therapy in the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia (IDA)".

Professor Dr Mohammed Tahir, Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) chaired the programme while Chairman of Agrani Bank, Siddique Rahman Chowdhury was the chief guest.

Speakers in the seminar focused on the knowledge about the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia, a prevalent preventable disease in the country by IV iron therapy. They said, "IV iron therapy rapidly increases iron level in blood significantly and thereby reduces the morbidity, mortality in women specially the pregnant group who are most vulnerable. They pointed out that iron sucrose present in the drug is currently the safest iron preparation according to latest clinical guideline. It reduces the blood transfusion rates in pregnant women who have severe anaemia near term".



Remedies from common natural sources

SONIA ALAM

Garlic

Allium sativum L. commonly known as Garlic has long been considered as natural remedy.

Garlic was used as most potent medicine by the ancient Egyptians, gnawed by Greek olympian athletes and thought to be effective for zapping bacteria, keeping your heart healthy, warding off coughs and colds.

In a study by National Academy of Sciences, USA shows that eating garlic appears to boost our natural supply of hydrogen sulfide. Hydrogen sulfide is actually poisonous at high concentrations — it is the same noxious byproduct of oil refining that smells like rotten eggs. But the body makes its own supply of the stuff, which acts as an antioxidant and transmits cellular signals that relax blood vessels and increase blood flow. The power to boost hydrogen sulfide production may help explain why a garlic-rich diet appears to protect against various cancers, including breast, prostate and colon cancer.

It is effective remedy for hypertension. Taking garlic regularly as a part of their diet is helpful for keeping high blood pressure in control.

Garlic can be used in respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, whooping cough and tuberculosis.

Garlic is the best natural remedy for fungal nail infections. Simply crush some fresh cloves and place them in contact with the affected area. The skin

should be washed before and after application. Garlic powder can also be used to combat toenail fungus.

Unfortunately garlic is not cooked properly way. Many home chefs cook it immediately after crushing or chopping it in home preparations. To maximise the health benefits, you should crush the garlic at room temperature and allow it to sit for about 15 minutes. That triggers an enzyme reaction that boosts the healthy compounds in garlic.

Honey

Honey is mainly consists of energy providing substances glucose, fructose and small amount of sucrose, dextrin, formic acid and volatile oils and trace amount of enzymes.

Honey has mild laxative, sedative, antiseptic properties. It is used for cold, cough, fever, sore throat, tongue ulcer, duodenal ulcers, liver disorders, constipation, diarrhoea, kidney and urinary disorders, pulmonary tuberculosis, rickets, scurvy and insomnia.

It may be applied as a remedy on open wounds after surgery. Honey is easily absorbed into the blood stream. Honey mixed with onion juice is a good remedy for atherosclerosis (a condition where blood vessel becomes narrow by fat deposition). Honey is an effective skin toner.

Neem

Neem oil is stimulant, antiseptic and alternatively used in skin disease. Neem leaf juice is given in juice; paste of leaves is used in case of small pox. The tender leaves with piper are used in worm infestations. Neem-leaves

are also used as insect-repellent, antiviral-antifungal.

Olive oil

The product of olive oil is called virgin oil obtained by gently pressing the peeled pulp from the endocarp. It contains mixed glycerides of oleic acid palmitic acid and so on. It is used as food, salads, with cooking and baking.

It has also laxatives properties to cure constipation. It is widely used in the manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations, soaps, textile lubricants, cosmetics, and plasters.

Sarpagandha

Sarpagandha or Rauwolfia is an erect, evergreen, small shrub plant. It is used as hypnotic, sedative, anti hypertensive. It is specific for insanity, reduces blood pressure and cures pain. It is employed in labors to increase uterine contractions and in certain neuro-psychiatric disorders.

Tulsi

Tulsi has expectorant use in bronchitis, cold, cough. It is also used in fever and gastric disorders.

The leaves have been employed as aromatic, carminative, stimulant and flavoring agent. It is also used as in gastric disorders of children and in hepatic infections. Dried powdered leaves are taken as snuff in ozena. Seeds are demulcent and given in disorders of the genito-urinary system. The plant is also used in snakebite and scorpion-sting.

The writer is a student of Department of Pharmacy at University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC).