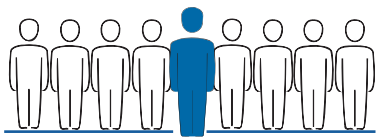


Understanding prostate cancer

If you've been diagnosed with prostate cancer, you may feel upset or scared. This resource will help you understand what the diagnosis means.

Prostate cancer is the **most commonly diagnosed cancer among Canadian men.**

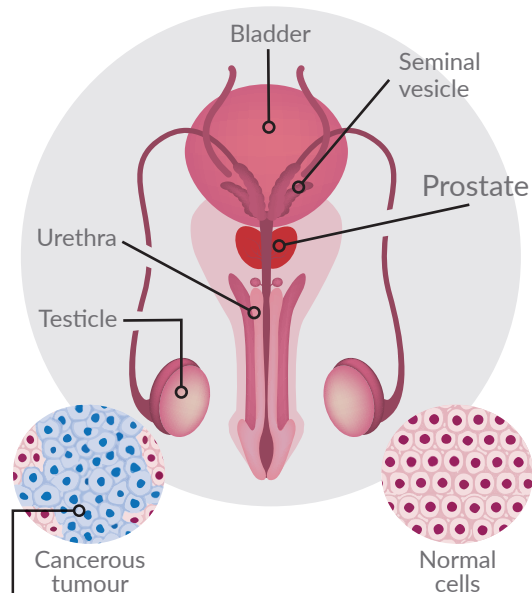


1 in 9

will be diagnosed in their lifetime

What is the prostate?

The prostate is part of the male reproductive system. It sits below the bladder and in front of the rectum. Its job is to help form semen by producing fluid that mixes with sperm from the testicles.



Prostate cancer happens when normal cells in the prostate grow faster or die more slowly than usual. This can lead to a cancerous tumour over time.

Understanding your test results

The grade and stage of the tumour will help you and your healthcare team decide which treatment is best for you.

Tumour grade

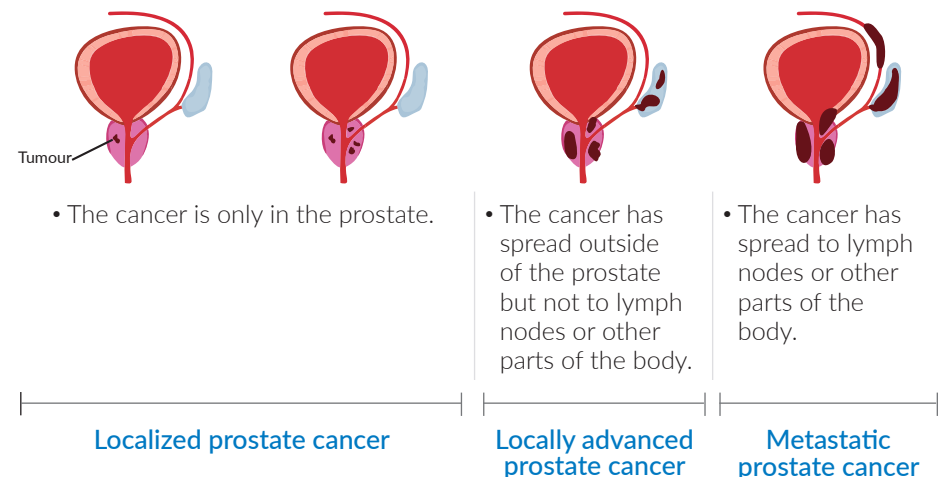
The grade describes how quickly the cancer is growing and the chance of it spreading. The most common grading system is the **Gleason classification system**. It is based on the patterns of the cancer cells and how different they look compared to normal prostate cells. Biopsy samples are examined under a microscope and each sample is given a **grade** of 1 to 5. The lower the grade, the more cancer cells look, act and are arranged like normal cells. The overall **Gleason score** is calculated by adding the two most common grades in the samples (e.g. 3+4=7).

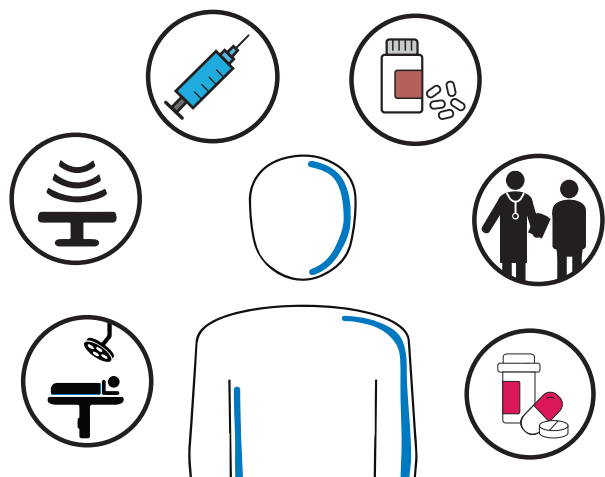
Gleason score

- 6 or less** Slow growing, less likely to spread
- 7** Growing at a moderate pace, may spread
- 8-10** Growing quickly, more likely to spread

Stage The most common staging system in Canada is the TNM system. It divides prostate cancer into 4 stages based on the size of the tumour (T), if the cancer has spread to lymph nodes (N) and if it has spread to other parts of the body, or metastasized (M). Generally the higher the stage number, the more the cancer has spread.

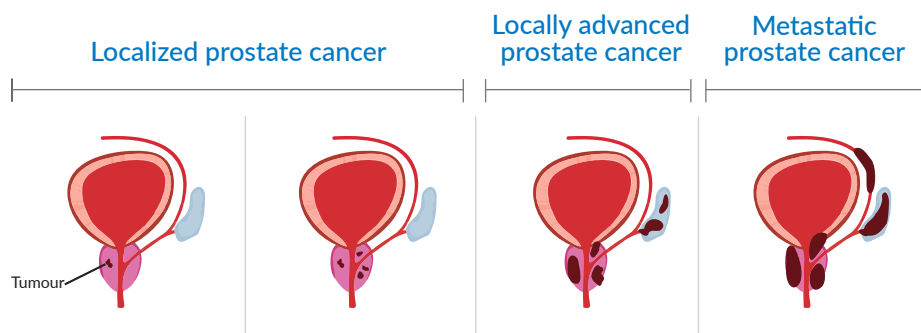
Doctors also use the terms localized, locally advanced or metastatic to describe where the cancer has spread.





How is prostate cancer treated?

The stage and grade of the tumour, your prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test results and your overall health are key in deciding what treatments are best. If you have a slow-growing and early stage prostate cancer, you may choose a monitoring strategy like active surveillance instead of other treatments.

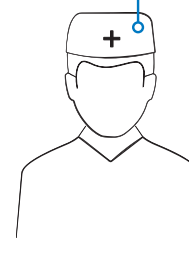


Treatment options	Localized	Locally advanced	Metastatic
Active surveillance	✓		
Surgery	✓	✓	
Radiation therapy	✓	✓	✓
Hormone therapy	✓	✓	✓
Chemotherapy			✓

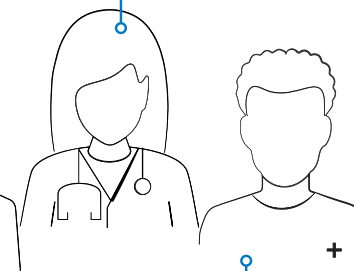
Your healthcare team

Urologist: treats diseases of the urinary tract and male reproductive system including the prostate; performs biopsies and prostate surgery

Medical oncologist: treats cancer with drug therapies such as chemotherapy and hormone therapy



Radiation oncologist: treats cancer with radiation therapy



Nurse: gives drugs and provides care, information and support during treatment

Talking to your team

You'll be supported by your healthcare team and may see some of them more than others depending which treatment you choose. You may also see other healthcare professionals like physical or occupational therapists or counsellors to help you recover and cope with your diagnosis and treatment.

Don't be afraid to ask them for advice or get a second opinion if you still have questions. It's important to understand treatment options and side effects to decide what is best for you.

Questions to ask

1. What is the tumour grade? Does this grade mean the cancer is likely to grow and spread quickly?
2. What is the cancer stage? Has the cancer spread outside the prostate?
3. What if I choose active surveillance instead of another treatment option?
4. What types of treatments are best for me? What are the benefits and risks of each?

