

Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH)

What is the prostate gland?

The prostate gland is located in the pelvic area in men. It sits just below the bladder. Its function is to secrete prostatic fluid or semen, during ejaculation. In young men, it is the size of a walnut, but over time it can grow to be quite large even when no cancer is present.

Symptoms of Prostate Enlargement

As the prostate grows with age, it squeezes the urethra, where the urine flows out from the bladder. Symptoms of enlarged prostate can include:

- Slow urinary stream
- Feeling that the bladder doesn't empty
- Needing to urinate frequently during the day
- Needing to urinate with urgency and possibly with leakage of urine
- Getting up at night more than once to urinate
- Complete inability to urinate

Evaluation for BPH

The first step in evaluating male patients with possible BPH is to evaluate the type and severity of symptoms being caused by the prostate. If these symptoms are bothersome enough, a number of tests may be performed. These include:

- Urinalysis. This test lets your provider know the concentration and pH of your urine, as well as revealing whether red blood cells, white blood cells, or crystals are present in the urine.
- Urinary flow rate. The flow rate measures the caliber of the urine stream and the rate at which urine is voided.
- Post void residual (PVR). This test uses ultrasound to measure the urine volume remaining in the bladder after urination.
- Digital rectal exam (DRE)
- Prostate volume is performed to measure the size, in grams, of the prostate gland.
- Cystoscopy uses a telescope to look inside the bladder through the natural opening.

Management of BPH

Medications

There are several medications that can help relax the muscles near the prostate gland. These medications help improve flow, reduce frequency and improve emptying of the bladder.

Treatments

There are many, many treatments for enlarged prostate. If medications don't control voiding symptoms, surgery may be necessary.

Some treatments, such as microwave therapy, can be performed in the office and are designed to shrink the prostate gradually. Others which require anesthesia, actually remove tissue from the prostate gland to open the urinary channel.

Dr. Lingeman brought the highly-successful Holmium Laser Enucleation of Prostate (HoLEP) to the United States in 1996. This procedure uses laser to remove 85 to 90% of the tissues of the prostate with very little bleeding and minimal side effects. This procedure can be used on any enlarged prostates, even if very large, and is performed with simply an overnight stay, in most cases. A similar procedure, Holmium Laser Ablation of Prostate (HoLAP) is best for smaller prostates. In HoLAP, the central portion of the prostate is vaporized, or ablated, to enlarge the opening for better urine flow. When you meet with one of our providers, you can discuss whether this is an appropriate option for your care.

Links:

American Urologic Association:

<http://www.urologyhealth.org/adult/index.cfm?cat=09&topic=39>

Urology Channel: http://www.urologychannel.com/prostate/bph/treatment_surg.shtml