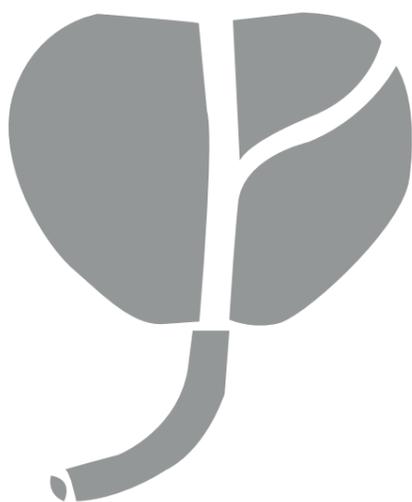




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### What is the prostate?

Prostate is a gland that lies under the bladder



### What conditions affect the prostate gland?



**Infection**



**Abnormal Enlargement**



**Prostate Cancer**

### How does prostate cancer present?

Weak stream of urine



Pain when passing urine



Difficulty in passing urine or holding it back



### How is it prevented?

Men over the age of 50 should have an annual exam and blood tests



## Questions

for Dr Thapelo Motshudi

#### 1 What is the prostate?

The prostate is a gland that lies under the bladder. The urethra, which is the pipe that takes urine from the bladder, first passes right through the centre of the prostate gland before it gets into the penis. The function of the prostate is to produce fluid that provides nutrition to sperm, and it also assists the fertilization process once the sperm has been deposited into the female.

#### 2 What conditions affect the prostate gland?

There are 3 main diseases that can affect this gland: infection (prostatitis); abnormal enlargement (BPH – benign prostatic hyperplasia); and prostate cancer. BPH refers to enlargement of the gland, as a man gets older with age. It is not cancer, but can have similar symptoms. Infections can occur at any age, however BPH and cancer start appearing in older men over the age of 50. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in South Africa, affecting approximately 17% of them.

#### 3 How does prostate cancer present?

When the prostate gland gets bigger due to cancer or BPH, it compresses the urethra and narrows it. As a result of this, prostate cancer can present some of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty in passing urine or holding it back
- Weak stream of urine
- Pain when passing urine
- Difficulty in having erections and painful ejaculation
- A need to pass urine frequently.

#### 4 How is it diagnosed?

Once cancer is suspected the doctor will perform a rectal examination to evaluate the prostate. A blood test will then be conducted to look for levels of a protein produced in the prostate gland. The test is called PSA (prostate specific antigen). Lastly, a biopsy is performed to confirm the diagnosis and determine the type of cancer. Depending on individual circumstances, and scan might be performed as well to assess whether the cancer has spread to surrounding organs like the bladder.

#### 5 How is it treated?

Treatment depends on the stage or severity of the cancer. The stage is determined from the biopsy results. Available options include just following up the cancer with regular tests and rectal exams; surgery to remove the prostate gland; radiation therapy; and hormones. Each type of treatment has specific results and complications.

#### 6 How is it prevented?

Just as women of a certain age have PAP smears and breast examinations annually to screen for cancer, men over the age of 50 should also have annual digital rectal exams and a PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood test. Those at high risk should start at age 40.