

## Enlarged Prostate: A Common Problem for Men

More than half of men in their 60s and as many as 90 out of 100 men in their 70s and older have benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH. BPH has to do with the prostate gland, a male sex gland located below the bladder.

Normally the prostate is roughly the size of a walnut, but when a man has BPH, the prostate becomes much bigger. The prostate surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine or sperm out through the penis. As a result, when the prostate grows, it squeezes the urethra, making it harder for urine to pass through. Eventually, with the urethra partly blocked, men with BPH can develop symptoms including:

- Feeling of not completely emptying the bladder
- Frequent urination
- Stopping and starting during urination
- Needing to urinate immediately when they get the urge
- Weak urine stream
- Having to push or strain to start urinating
- Getting up often at night to urinate

If you've been diagnosed with BPH but have no problems with urination, you do not need treatment. Even so, you and your doctor should keep an eye on your condition. This is called "watchful waiting."

If you do have symptoms, watchful waiting is still an option. Deciding what, if anything, to do about BPH depends on how much your symptoms bother you. Treatment choices range from having no active treatment for now to having surgery.

### **Treatment Choices**

Watchful waiting: Watchful waiting involves having regular check-ups to track the condition but no medication or surgery. Men who choose this approach also avoid things that can make symptoms worse, such as alcohol, coffee, and cold and sinus medications with decongestants.

Medication: Men who choose medication take pills to shrink the prostate, or muscle relaxants that help increase urine flow, or both. These medications can improve symptoms, but can also cause side effects.

Device procedures: During these procedures, doctors insert a needle or probe into the opening in the penis and apply heat to the prostate. Although slightly less risky than surgery, these treatments are fairly new so very little is known about how long symptom relief lasts.

Surgery: Surgery involves one of several procedures, each of which takes a different approach to removing parts of the prostate. Although effective, surgery carries risks.

### **A LifeSteps Health Coach Can Help**

Making a decision about the different treatment options can be difficult. Luckily, you are not alone. A Health Coach can help you work with your doctor to understand your specific circumstances and find the treatment that is best for you. If appropriate, a Health Coach will send you a complimentary videotape, such as *Treatment Choices for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia*.

Health Coaches are specially trained healthcare professionals, such as nurses, dietitians, and respiratory therapists, available by phone, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no charge to you. To talk to a Health Coach, call 1-877-LIFE 123. You can also get information online at <http://mystandard> or [www.asdLifeSteps.com](http://www.asdLifeSteps.com).