

Strong is he who takes care of himself: prevent prostate cancer

Written by: Horiens - 10/11/2023

Why is talking about prostate cancer so important? With this question, nurse Lucas Gardim, from Healthbit, Horiens' partner company in the management of corporate health plans, began a live especially dedicated to **Blue November**, held on November 9 for members and beneficiaries of the health plans of various companies that Horiens serves.

The answer is an urgent alert: according to the National Cancer Institute (INCA), 30% of all cancers in Brazil are prostate cancer. "We need to talk about it. This type of cancer is top of the list among men," said Lucas. "We need to look carefully at prevention measures and risk factors, as well as knowing the right time to go for screening tests," he added.

To begin with, do you know what the prostate is and what its function is in men's bodies?

The prostate is responsible for producing the nutrients and fluids that protect and nourish the sperm in semen. It is located just below the bladder and in front of the rectum. The urethra runs through it, which explains why prostatic alterations result in difficulty urinating, a common complaint in men over 50.

In most cases, this difficulty is caused by benign growth of the prostate, which occurs with advancing age and is called benign prostatic hyperplasia.

Signs and symptoms

In its initial stage, prostate cancer is silent in its progression. Many people do not show any symptoms or, when they do, they are similar to those of benign prostate growth. "That's why screening tests are essential," says Lucas.

Find out what the main symptoms are:

- Difficulty urinating
- Needing to urinate more frequently during the day or night
- Decreased urine flow
- Blood in the urine

Risk factors

The disease is more common in men aged 60 and over, those with a family history of prostate cancer and those of African descent.

Learn more about the risk factors:

- **Age:** the risk increases with advancing age, especially after the age of 60.
- **Family history of cancer:** men whose father or brother had prostate cancer before the age of 60
- **Overweight and obesity:** recent studies show greater risk in those with high body weight

How to prevent?

Lifestyle is a key element in the prevention of virtually all types of cancer, including prostate cancer. Taking care of your diet, getting quality sleep and exercising regularly, as well as avoiding sedentary lifestyles throughout the day, are basic premises.

Learn more about prevention:

- Have a healthy diet, minimizing processed foods
- Maintain adequate body weight
- Engage in regular physical activity
- Do not smoke
- Limit alcohol consumption
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Up-to-date tests: early detection can save your life

Tests for the [early diagnosis](#) of prostate cancer should be carried out annually and include a [PSA test](#) and rectal examination. For most men, it is recommended that these examinations begin at the age of 50 and are repeated annually.

For black individuals and those with first-degree relatives with a history of prostate cancer (father and brothers), the tests are indicated from the age of 40.

In the event of alterations in these tests, complementary tests are recommended, such as an MRI scan or even a prostate biopsy, for example.

“We need to overcome the taboos and prejudices that still exist in relation to the issue. After all, when detected early, prostate cancer has a high chance of being cured,” concludes Lucas.