

ENLARGED PROSTATE: THE SILENT URINARY HEALTH PROBLEM

WHY EARLY SYMPTOMS SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED

Understanding Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), Warning Signs and a Holistic Health Approach

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Introduction: When Passing Urine Becomes a Daily Struggle

Many men, particularly after the age of 50, gradually begin experiencing changes in their urinary habits. At first, the symptoms may appear minor: taking longer to start urination, a weak urine stream, waking repeatedly at night to pass urine, frequent trips to the bathroom, or feeling that the bladder has not emptied completely.

Many simply say: *"This is normal because I am getting older."* But persistent urinary symptoms should never simply be ignored.

One common cause is an enlarged prostate, medically known as **BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA (BPH)**. BPH means enlargement of the prostate gland that is not caused by cancer. It can interfere with normal urine flow because the prostate surrounds part of the urethra—the tube through which urine leaves the bladder.

Not every enlarged prostate is cancer. But every persistent urinary problem deserves proper evaluation.

What Is the Prostate Gland?

The prostate is a small gland found only in males. It is located below the urinary bladder, in front of the rectum, and around the upper part of the urethra. The prostate contributes fluid to semen.

When a man is young, the prostate is relatively small. However, the prostate can continue to grow with age. As the gland enlarges, it may gradually compress the urethra, creating difficulty in passing urine.

What Is Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)?

Benign = Not cancer

Prostatic = Related to the prostate

Hyperplasia = Increase in the number of cells

Therefore, **BPH is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland.** It is one of the most common prostate problems in older men. BPH becomes increasingly common with advancing age, and age-related

biological and hormonal changes are believed to play an important role.

The Most Important Misconception: “Enlarged Prostate Means Cancer”

This misconception creates unnecessary fear. **BPH is NOT the same as prostate cancer.** An enlarged prostate caused by BPH is benign.

However, having urinary symptoms does not automatically prove that the cause is BPH. Similar symptoms can occur due to urinary tract infection, prostatitis, bladder problems, neurological conditions, certain medications, prostate cancer and other urinary tract disorders. Therefore, self-diagnosis should be avoided.

The Early Warning Signs of an Enlarged Prostate

The symptoms of BPH may develop gradually. Common symptoms include:

- **Difficulty starting urination:** taking time before the urine stream begins.
- **Weak urine stream:** reduced force of the urine stream.
- **Interrupted urination:** the stream may stop and start.
- **Dribbling after urination:** small amounts of urine continue after finishing.
- **Frequent night-time urination:** repeatedly waking from sleep to pass urine (nocturia).
- **Frequent urination:** needing to visit the bathroom more often.
- **Sudden urgency:** a difficult-to-control urge to urinate.
- **Feeling of incomplete bladder emptying:** feeling that urine remains after passing urine.

These symptoms are commonly grouped under **LOWER URINARY TRACT SYMPTOMS (LUTS)**. BPH can be one cause of LUTS, but not every person with LUTS has BPH.

Why Does the Prostate Enlarge?

The exact cause of BPH is not completely understood. However, several factors are associated with its development.

- **Ageing:** BPH becomes more common with increasing age.
- **Hormonal changes:** changes in male hormonal balance with ageing may influence prostate growth.
- **Family history:** family history may increase the likelihood in some individuals.
- **Metabolic health:** diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and reduced physical activity may be associated with a greater likelihood of BPH.

Prostate Size and Symptoms: Bigger Is Not Always Worse

The size of the prostate does not always perfectly match the severity of symptoms.

Some men may have a significantly enlarged prostate but relatively mild symptoms. Others may have a moderately enlarged prostate but significant difficulty passing urine.

Symptoms can also depend upon the location of enlargement, the degree of urethral compression, bladder muscle function, residual urine in the bladder and other urinary conditions. Therefore, an ultrasound report showing prostate size alone should not be used to judge the complete severity of the problem.

What Happens When BPH Is Ignored?

Not every person with BPH develops serious complications. However, significant obstruction can sometimes lead to:

- **Urinary retention:** inability to pass urine, requiring urgent medical attention.
- **Recurrent urinary tract infection:** residual urine may increase infection risk.
- **Bladder stones:** long-standing incomplete bladder emptying may contribute to stone formation.
- **Blood in urine:** some individuals may experience hematuria.
- **Bladder dysfunction:** the bladder muscle may become overworked and weaken over time.
- **Kidney problems:** severe long-standing obstruction can potentially affect the upper urinary tract and kidneys.

When Should You Seek Medical Help Immediately?

Certain symptoms should never be ignored. Seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- Complete inability to urinate.
- Severe lower abdominal pain with inability to pass urine.
- Blood in urine.
- Painful frequent urination with fever and chills.
- Severe or rapidly worsening urinary discomfort.

How Is Enlarged Prostate Diagnosed?

Proper diagnosis generally begins with a detailed evaluation. Depending upon symptoms and clinical circumstances, a healthcare professional may consider:

- **Medical history** and detailed discussion of urinary symptoms.
- **Symptom assessment**, sometimes using the International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS).
- **Physical examination**, including digital rectal examination where appropriate.
- **Urine tests** to identify infection, blood or other abnormalities.
- **PSA blood test** in appropriate clinical situations.
- **Ultrasound** to assess prostate size, bladder condition and residual urine.
- **Post-void residual (PVR)** measurement.
- **Uroflowmetry** to assess the rate and pattern of urine flow.

No single test should be interpreted in isolation. Evaluation should be individualized.

The Root Cause Approach: Looking Beyond the Prostate

At **SR VAIDYA HOLISTIC WELLNESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**, we believe that health awareness should not stop at the name of a disease.

The question should not simply be: *“What tablet should I take for my enlarged prostate?”*

We should also ask: **“What factors are influencing my urinary and overall health?”**

A holistic assessment may consider age, metabolic health, diabetes, obesity, physical activity, sleep, fluid intake patterns, medication use, bladder habits, stress and associated urinary conditions.

This does not mean that all BPH is caused by lifestyle. BPH is strongly associated with ageing and biological changes. However, overall lifestyle and metabolic health remain important for general wellbeing.

Modern Medical Management of BPH

Treatment depends upon symptom severity, impact on quality of life, prostate characteristics, the presence of complications and individual health conditions.

1. Watchful Waiting

For mild symptoms that do not significantly affect quality of life, regular monitoring may be appropriate.

2. Lifestyle Measures

Some people may benefit from reducing excessive evening fluid intake, limiting caffeine, avoiding prolonged holding of urine and reviewing medicines that may worsen urinary symptoms.

3. Medicines

Doctors may prescribe medicines such as alpha-blockers, 5-alpha reductase inhibitors or other medicines depending on the individual's symptoms and prostate characteristics.

4. Minimally Invasive Procedures

Several minimally invasive procedures may be appropriate for selected patients.

5. Surgery

Surgery may be considered when symptoms are severe, medicines are inadequate or complications develop.

Ayurveda and Prostate Health: A Responsible Holistic Perspective

Ayurveda traditionally emphasizes maintaining balance through **Ahara** (appropriate diet), **Vihara** (appropriate lifestyle), **Nidra** (proper sleep), and physical and mental wellbeing.

From a holistic perspective, balanced food habits, regular physical activity, proper sleep, healthy bowel habits and stress management may contribute to overall wellbeing.

However, persistent urinary obstruction requires proper medical diagnosis. A person should never assume that all urinary symptoms can be treated at home. Responsible wellness care must work alongside appropriate medical evaluation.

Panchakarma and Holistic Wellness: Individual Assessment Is Essential

Panchakarma is an important component of classical Ayurvedic therapeutic practice. However, there should never be a one-treatment-for-everyone approach.

Before considering any therapeutic programme, an individual's age, general strength, diabetes, blood pressure, kidney function, existing urinary problems, current medications, prostate evaluation and the presence of urinary retention or infection should be considered.

ASSESS FIRST — INTERVENE APPROPRIATELY

No wellness programme should delay urgent medical treatment where urinary obstruction or infection is suspected.

Daily Habits That May Help Reduce Urinary Discomfort

1. Manage Evening Fluid Intake

Avoid excessive fluid intake immediately before bedtime if night-time urination is troublesome. However, do not intentionally dehydrate yourself.

2. Observe the Effect of Caffeine

Coffee, tea and other caffeinated beverages may increase urinary frequency and urgency in some individuals.

3. Stay Physically Active

Regular activity supports weight management, metabolic health, cardiovascular health and general wellbeing.

4. Do Not Habitually Hold Urine for Long Periods

Maintain regular and healthy bladder habits.

5. Review Your Medications

Some medicines may worsen urinary symptoms. Do not stop prescribed medicines on your own; discuss concerns with a qualified doctor.

6. Maintain Healthy Metabolic Health

Appropriate management of diabetes, obesity, blood pressure and cholesterol supports overall health.

The Most Important Message for Men Above 50

If you are experiencing a weak urine stream, frequent urination, repeated night-time urination, difficulty starting urine, dribbling or a feeling of incomplete bladder emptying, please do not simply say: *"It is because of age."*

Age may be a factor, but persistent symptoms deserve evaluation. Early assessment can help identify BPH, infection, bladder problems, prostatitis and other urinary conditions.

A Message to Families

Prostate and urinary problems are often subjects men hesitate to discuss. Embarrassment can delay diagnosis.

Early attention is not fear. It is responsibility.

Final Thought: Don't Treat Only the Symptom — Understand the Whole Person

A weak urine stream is not merely a minor inconvenience. Repeated night-time urination is not merely a normal part of ageing.

Persistent urinary symptoms can affect sleep, mental wellbeing, daily productivity, sexual health, family life and quality of life.

***DON'T PANIC.
DON'T SELF-DIAGNOSE.
DON'T IGNORE.***

Instead: **Understand → Evaluate → Identify → Manage.**

At **SR VAIDYA HOLISTIC WELLNESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**, our philosophy of health awareness emphasizes:

***ROOT CAUSE UNDERSTANDING + RESPONSIBLE MEDICAL EVALUATION +
HOLISTIC LIFESTYLE SUPPORT***

Because true wellness begins when we listen to the body's early warning signals.

A Message from SR VAIDYA HOLISTIC WELLNESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

“Growing older is natural. Ignoring the warning signs of the body is optional.”

An enlarged prostate may be a common condition with ageing. But urinary difficulty should never be silently tolerated without understanding its cause.

Seek appropriate evaluation. Understand your condition. Protect your urinary health. Take informed decisions.

EARLY AWARENESS IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH.

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Health Disclaimer

This article is intended for educational and health-awareness purposes only. It does not replace consultation, diagnosis or treatment by a qualified medical practitioner or urologist. Urinary symptoms may have causes other than benign prostatic hyperplasia. Individuals who are unable to pass urine, have severe pain, fever, chills, blood in urine or significant urinary symptoms should seek prompt medical attention. Ayurvedic and wellness interventions should be individualized and should not delay necessary medical diagnosis or treatment.