

Prostatitis (Inflammation of the Prostate Gland)

What is prostatitis?

Prostatitis is swelling and irritation (inflammation) of the prostate. The prostate gland is part of a man's reproductive system. It is about the size of a walnut and located between the bladder and the penis. The prostate gland surrounds the upper part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. It makes fluid that nourishes sperm and helps carry it out of the body during sex.

Prostatitis is a common problem.

What is the cause?

Sometimes prostatitis is caused by infection with bacteria. Usually the bacteria come from other infected parts of the urinary tract, such as the bladder or kidneys. The bacteria can spread to the prostate through the urethra after sex. The bacteria can also spread to the prostate through the bloodstream.

In many cases the prostate gets swollen and tender without infection. Sometimes it may be a long-term problem. Often the cause is not known.

What are the symptoms?

When bacteria are the cause, you have clear signs of illness and you need to get treatment promptly. Common symptoms of a bacterial infection include fever, chills, sweats, and pain in your groin or lower back. Other symptoms of a bacterial infection may include:

- Pain behind your scrotum
- Pain or burning when you urinate
- Urinating more often
- A strong and sudden urge to urinate
- A weak stream of urine
- Trouble emptying your bladder
- Trouble starting or stopping the flow of urine
- Blood in your urine
- Pain when you have a bowel movement

The symptoms of prostatitis that is **not** caused by a bacterial infection happen more slowly and are milder. They may include:

- Slight discomfort when you urinate, often felt at the base of your penis in the area between the scrotum and anus
- Mild lower backache
- Aching in your penis, scrotum, or middle to lower belly
- Pain during or after the release of semen during sex

- Small amounts of blood in the semen

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and examine you. You may have tests such as:

- A rectal exam, which your provider does by gently putting a lubricated and gloved finger in your rectum to feel the prostate gland.
- Urine tests
- Tests of fluid from your prostate

Your provider may ask you to give a urine sample before a rectal exam of the prostate. During the rectal exam, your provider will press on your prostate. This will cause fluid from the prostate to enter your urinary tract. After the rectal exam you will provide another sample of urine. This will help your provider know if your prostate or urinary tract is infected.

How is it treated?

A bacterial infection is treated with antibiotic medicine. For severe symptoms, you may need to spend some time in the hospital for IV antibiotics.

Your healthcare provider may prescribe other medicines to help lessen your symptoms.

How can I take care of myself?

Here are some things you can do that may help relieve pain and other symptoms:

- Follow the full course of treatment prescribed by your healthcare provider. Take your medicine for as long as your healthcare provider prescribes, even if you feel better. If you are taking an antibiotic and you stop taking the medicine too soon, you may not kill all of the bacteria and you may get sick again. If you have side effects from your medicine, talk to your healthcare provider.
- Take nonprescription pain medicine, such as ibuprofen or naproxen. Read the label and take as directed. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen and naproxen, may cause stomach bleeding and other problems. These risks increase with age. Unless recommended by your healthcare provider, you should not take this medicine for more than 10 days.
- Take a warm bath.

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. Ask your provider:

- How and when you will hear your test results
- How long it will take to recover
- What activities you should avoid and when you can return to your normal activities
- How to take care of yourself at home

- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them

Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup.

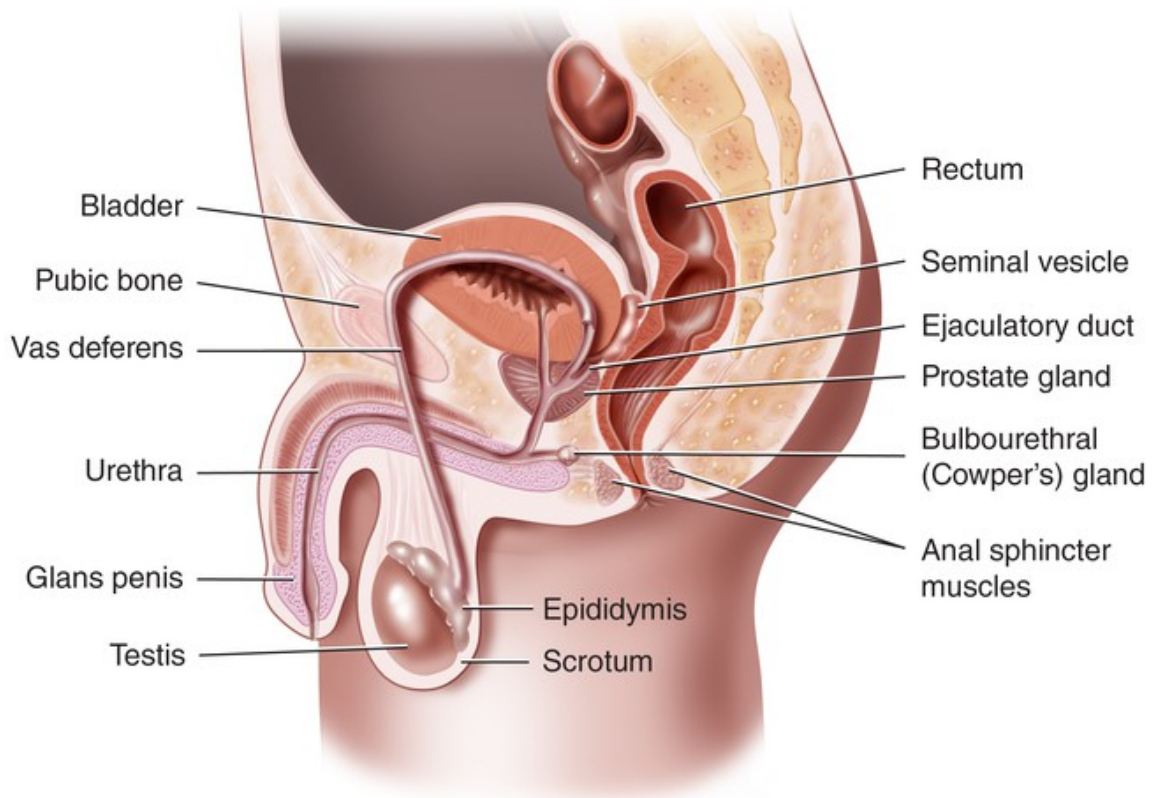
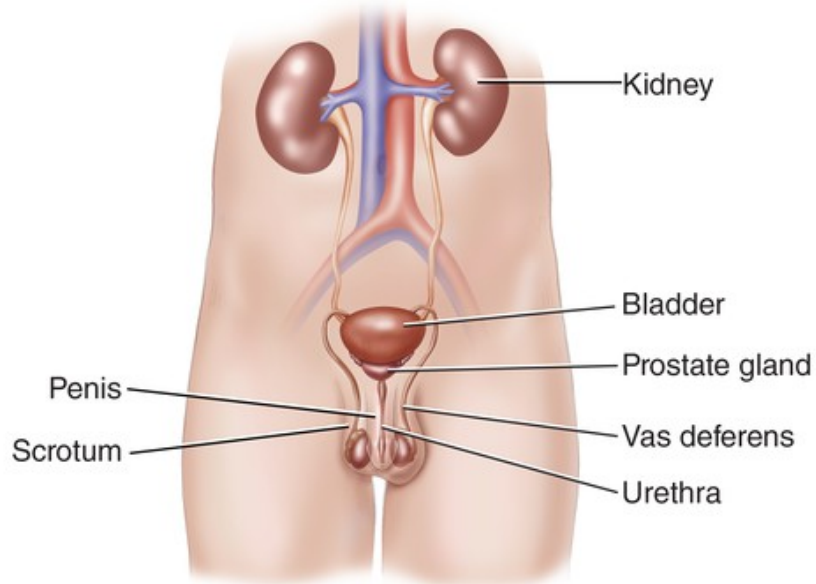
How can I help prevent prostatitis?

- Avoid sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs and STIs). Use latex or polyurethane condoms during sex. Have just 1 sexual partner who does not have sex with anyone else.
- Keep your genital area clean. If you are a man who has not been circumcised, good hygiene includes gently pulling back the foreskin to wash the tip of the penis every time you bathe or shower. This helps to prevent urinary tract infections, which can lead to prostatitis.
- Get prompt treatment for any urinary tract problems. This lowers your risk for prostate infection.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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Male Pelvis



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