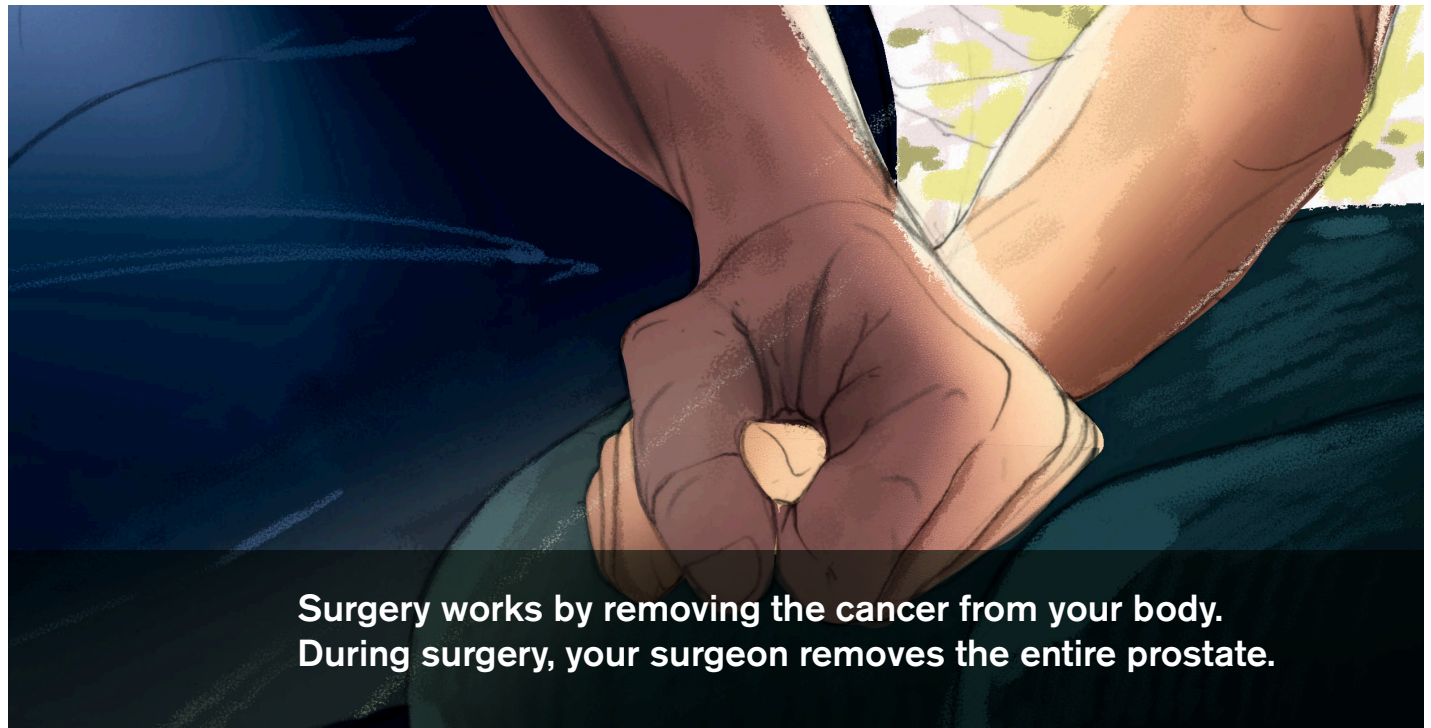


About Your Prostate Cancer Treatment

Surgery



**Surgery works by removing the cancer from your body.
During surgery, your surgeon removes the entire prostate.**

How will surgery for prostate cancer affect your sex life?

Every kind of prostate cancer treatment causes changes to your sexual function. After surgery for prostate cancer, you will likely notice these changes:

What can you do about the sexual side effects?

- Your doctor can prescribe medications or devices to help you have erections.
- A certified sex therapist can help you find a way to stay sexually active. In the US, you can find a certified sex therapist near you through the website for the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists – aasect.org.

Problems with erections (Erectile dysfunction / ED)


- You will likely have some trouble getting your erections back right away after surgery.
- This may improve over the next couple of years. Erections usually do not go back to being as firm as they were before surgery.
- If you had problems before surgery and used medicine or a device to help your erections, you will most likely need to keep doing so.

Change in desire for sex

Desire for sex varies, but most men continue to have their normal desire for sex after surgery.

- Some men, when they find that desire does not lead to erection, try to avoid thinking about sex. This can make them think they are less interested in sex.
- Some men feel sad or upset about the changes in erections and worry about satisfying a partner. It's common that when men feel sad or upset in this way, they do not feel desire for sex.





About Your Prostate Cancer Treatment: Surgery

Changes in orgasm

Many men continue to have pleasurable orgasms after surgery

- Some men notice that orgasms take longer to achieve and are less intense. Rarely, some men have painful orgasms.
- This usually gets better with time and with sexual stimulation.

Your orgasms will be “dry” after surgery, meaning that you will not ejaculate when you reach orgasm

- Semen is mostly made in the prostate and seminal vesicles, which are removed during surgery.
- Some men feel sad because they miss the feeling of ejaculating. Others don't mind.

You might feel pain when you reach orgasm.

- Some men have this experience and it understandably can impact desire for sexual activity. This discomfort usually goes away with time. Talk to your doctor about why this may be happening and if there is a way to help the pain with medicine.

Change in fertility

- After surgery, you will be infertile (not able to father a child).
- If you want to be able to have a child after treatment, talk to your doctor about banking your sperm (saving and freezing your sperm so you can use it after treatment).

Problems with leaking urine during sex

You might leak urine during foreplay or orgasm. For many men, this stops after one year, but some men continue to have these symptoms. Some men feel embarrassed by it, but you can work through these emotions.

- Urine is a normal body fluid, just like ejaculate, sweat or saliva. It won't hurt you or your partner, even if it comes out during penetration, unless your partner has a history of recurrent infections. Using a condom will create a safe barrier.
- If you can, work on accepting this as a minor nuisance.
- You can disguise urine by using a lubricant to moisturize the penis during sexual activity.
- You can also use condoms to contain the leakage.

Penile shortening

After surgery, you may notice that your penis is shorter. This can happen for several reasons:

- When your body is under stress, it sends out signals through your nervous system and makes your penis retract.
- Reconnecting the urethra to the bladder after removing the prostate can cause the penis to shorten.
- If you go a long time without having any erections, it can cause scarring of the tissues in your penis that help with erections (erectile tissues) and can lead to penile shortening.

The shortening may be limited with rehabilitation.



Sexual Recovery

What is sex like after prostate cancer surgery?



What **usually** happens to a man's body during sex?

What **changes** after prostate cancer treatment?

Desire

- Desire develops and grows when we think about sex, have fantasies about sexual situations, enjoying those thoughts and begin to imagine making it happen.

After prostate cancer treatment

- Most men continue to have their usual desire for sex.
- But, the body does not respond to the fantasy or visual stimulation by creating an erection because the nerves that create erections are not working.
- You may have fewer sexual fantasies.
 - This is often due to feeling sad and discouraged about not being able to have erections when you feel turned on.

Arousal

- The body reacts to those thoughts and gets ready for sex.
- Heart starts pumping a bit faster.
- Blood pressure goes a bit higher.
- Breathing gets heavier.
- Blood begins to flow to sexually sensitive areas of the body.
- Men get an erection.

After prostate cancer treatment

- You may feel less sensitivity in your penis and you will need longer stimulation.
- You may not be able to get an erection on your own.
- You can still have erections with the help of aids like vacuum pumps, penile suppositories, injections or pills.

Plateau

- The body gets ready to have an orgasm.
- Excitement builds with stimulation and the feeling of pleasure.
- The body begins to tense up.
- Men's testicles withdraw up into the scrotum and the erection becomes very hard.

After prostate cancer treatment

- It may take longer to reach orgasm.

Orgasm

- The body suddenly releases sexual tension.
- Muscles in the pelvic floor contract or spasm.
- Men release semen.

After prostate cancer treatment

The good news is that you don't need an erection to have an orgasm. The nerves that control pleasure are not affected by prostate cancer treatment.

- Your orgasm may be different. You will likely still be able to reach orgasm, but it may take longer.
- Your orgasm will be “dry”, meaning you will not ejaculate.
- You may feel pain when you reach orgasm but this usually goes away with time.

Resolution / Refractory Period

- The body relaxes.
- Muscles relax, blood pressure drops, there is a feeling of satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Men usually need recovery time before they can reach orgasm again.
- If the orgasm is experienced with a partner, couples often feel relaxed and connected.

After prostate cancer treatment

- You will need to wait longer before you can reach orgasm again. You will still feel relaxation and pleasure after orgasm.

