

Risk Factors

The strongest risk factors for developing prostate cancer are age (being age 65 and older), ethnicity (African, North American, or northern/western European descent), and family history. A high fat diet may increase your risk for developing prostate cancer, and being obese may increase your risk for dying from prostate cancer.¹



Warning Signs and Symptoms

There are no symptoms in the early stages of the disease. Later, symptoms that would occur include: inability to urinate or difficulty urinating; weak or interrupted urine flow; need to urinate frequently, especially at night; blood in the urine; pain or burning with urination. Continual pain in the lower back, pelvic area or upper thighs may indicate prostate cancer that has spread to other body organs. However, many of these symptoms may be caused by other benign (harmless) health conditions. Please check with a doctor or other health professional if you have any of these symptoms.¹

Early Detection

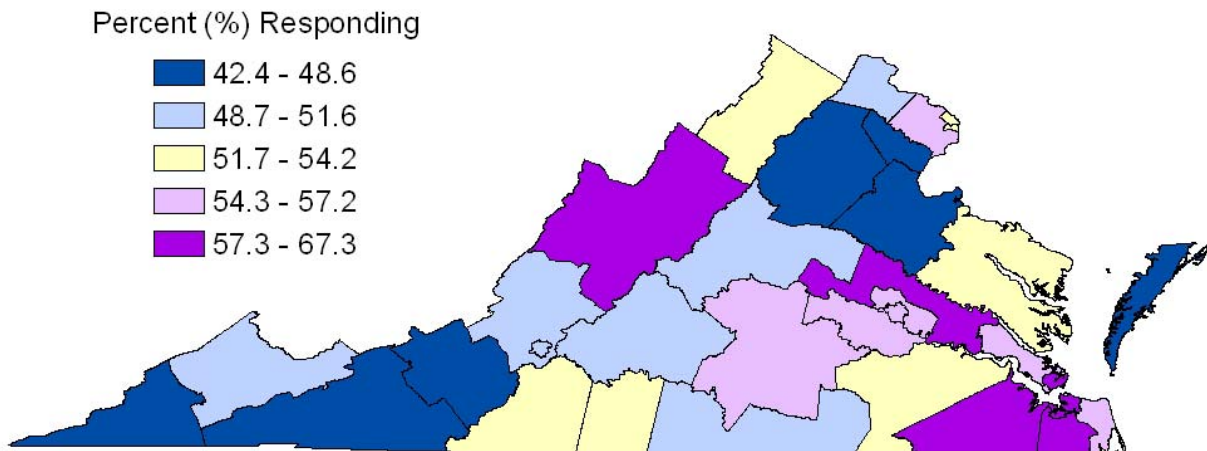
Having a simple blood test, called Prostate-Specific Antigen test, or PSA, to detect a special protein in the bloodstream and a Digital Rectal Exam, or DRE, are the best forms of screening and early detection for prostate cancer, *especially for men under the age of 75*. The American Cancer Society recommends that men who are at average risk (not African-American, no family history) should begin screening every year at age 50 (earlier if you are at higher risk).¹

Prostate Cancer in Virginia

- Prostate cancer was the leading cancer diagnosed among men in the U.S. and in Virginia.^{2,3} According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated **186,320 men** in the U.S., *including 4,430 men in Virginia*, will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2008.¹
- Prostate cancer was the second leading cause of death among men in the U.S. and Virginia.^{2,4} An estimated **28,860 men** will die from prostate cancer nationwide, *including 630 men in Virginia*, in 2008.¹ Prostate cancer will account for 25% of all new cancer cases and 10% of all cancer deaths in the U.S.¹
- Between 2001 and 2005, men were diagnosed with prostate cancer at a rate of **156.5 cases** per 100,000,³ and died at a rate of **30.1 deaths** per 100,000.⁴ The U.S. incidence and mortality rates were, respectively, 163.0 cases and 26.7 deaths per 100,000. Virginia had the **seventh (7th)** highest prostate cancer mortality rate among all states.²
- Men have a one-in-six chance of developing prostate cancer during their lifetime, with most prostate cancer cases occurring after age 70.¹
- In Virginia, black men have a 67% greater risk of developing prostate cancer and have a mortality rate 2.5 times greater than that of white men.^{3,4} National data indicates that Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian men had lower prostate cancer incidence and mortality rates among all racial and ethnic groups.²

- From 1995 to 2001, the prostate cancer incidence rate in Virginia increased, after which it began a decline. Between 1995 and 2005, the prostate cancer mortality rate decreased by 35%.^{3,4}
- The five-year relative survival rate for prostate cancer is nearly **100%** if diagnosed early.¹ Prostate cancer is treatable when detected early. In Virginia, 72% of men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in its earliest (local) stage when it's most curable. White men (75%) and black men (70%) were diagnosed at an early stage at similar rates.³
- According to a 2006 state health behavior survey, **54%** of men 40 years and older had a PSA test within the past two years—similar to the national rate of 53.8%. Rates of prostate cancer screening, specifically, PSA testing, were lowest among men who were lower income and uninsured. Black men—a group at higher risk—had one of the highest screening rates.⁵ Figure 1 shows that Lenowisco (42.4%), New River (45.5%), and Rappahannock (47.1%) had the lowest PSA test rates among the 35 health districts.

Figure 1 – Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test in Past Two Years by Health District, Men 40 and Older, Virginia, 2004-2006



Source: Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Percentages are weighted.

- In Virginia, there were 1,783 inpatient hospitalizations for prostate cancer that occurred in 2006, at a total charge (cost) of nearly \$52 million. The average length of stay was 2.8 days, and the average charge per stay was \$29,059.⁶

¹ American Cancer Society *Cancer Facts & Figures 2008* (<http://www.cancer.org>).

² Ries LAG, Melbert D, Krapcho M, Stinchcomb DG, et al. (eds.), *SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2005*, National Cancer Institute. Bethesda, MD: 2008 (http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975_2005/).

³ Virginia Cancer Registry. Based on combined data from 2001 to 2005. Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.

⁴ VDH Division of Health Statistics. Based on combined data from 2001 to 2005. Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.

⁵ Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Rates are population-weighted.

⁶ Virginia Health Information Hospital Discharge Patient-Level Dataset.