

# BACK<sup>2</sup>NORMAL *be* responsible.™ MONTHLY TOPIC

June 2017

## prostate health

### WHY IT MATTERS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Many people don't realize the role the pelvic floor plays in physical therapy and common conditions like low back pain and incontinence. And amongst those who have heard of pelvic floor physical therapy, many think its limited to postpartum women and us ladies who urinate a little when we sneeze. In reality, everyone has a pelvic floor, and it can be just as big of an issue to address in men as in women. In honor of Men's Health Month, we've compiled some information on one of the biggest pelvic floor issues for men; the prostate!

#### What is the prostate?

The prostate is a small gland located anterior to the rectum. It plays a role in seminal production, urinary continence, and visceral mechanics or the stability of the organs.

#### Why does the prostate matter?

An estimated 30% of men under 50 and 50% of men over 50 will suffer issues with their prostate, in particular urinary issues. The various common conditions affecting the prostate include: benign prostatic hypertrophy, cancer, and prostatitis.

#### How do I know if I have prostate problems?

Prostate conditions can be asymptomatic and go undetected for years, often until symptoms are severe. So screening is a must! But here are some symptoms of common prostate disorders:

- Trouble urinating
- Intermittent or weak urine stream
- Pain with urination
- Feeling the urge to push your lower abdomen to help you urinate
- Urinary urgency
- Waking up to urinate a lot in the night
- Kidney and/or low back pain
- Inguinal hernias
- Frequent urinary track infections
- Abdominal, pelvic, or genital pain

**There are no widely agreed upon standards for prostate cancer screening, but if you are experiencing changes in urinary patterns or back/abdominal pain is not relieved by position changes, consult a medical professional. This is not a normal consequence of aging!**



## More about common Prostate Disorders:

**Benign Prostate Hypertrophy:** Essentially an enlarged prostate, BPH can result in bladder and urethral compression, causing changes in the ability to pass urine. BPH is benign and does not become cancerous, but can begin between age 35-40.

**Prostate Cancer:** Prostate cancer is commonly found by rheumatologists in the hunt for the cause of unremitting low back pain. It's also often found in men who've passed away from other causes. Prostate cancer is typically diagnosed based on rectal exam and PSA (prostate specific antigen) testing. It is a common source of metastasis to the spine.

**Prostatitis:** This condition tends to appear in men around the age of 50 and consists of an infection of the prostate. While it may present with a fever in the acute stages, it can become chronic and lose the typical signs of infection. Prostatitis can cause sterility, issues with the liver, erectile dysfunction, and low back pain.

## What does physical therapy and wellness have to do with all of this?

An active lifestyle, whole nutrition, and smoking cessation have all been linked to reduced risk of prostate dysfunction. A qualified physical therapy and wellness practice can help you get your diet, exercise, and stress reduction in order. But physical therapists can also tackle prostate issues head on with manual therapy.

Because of the elusiveness of diagnosing prostate issues, they're often met with immediate prescription for surgery or medication. Manual therapy may be a better first approach. While not used to directly shrink the prostate, manual therapy can reduce the effects of prostate enlargement seen in BPH, cancer, and prostatitis by influencing the position, pressure, and mobility of the prostate and surrounding structures. A physical therapist can also work with a patient to strengthen the pelvic floor and teach strategies for dealing with incontinence, impotence and urinary dysfunction.

Visit [www.back2normalpt.com](http://www.back2normalpt.com) or find us on social media to learn more about what we offer in the way of physical therapy and overall wellbeing.

Special thanks to our contributing writer, **Kirsten Snellenburg, LMT, MPT, DPT**. Back 2 Normal welcomed Kirsten to the team in Spring 2017. She is, amongst many other things, a pelvic floor specialist.



## productofthethmonth

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- More than 500 easy-to-apply Action Steps
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