



FROM THE OFFICE OF DR.

Managing prostatitis

What is prostatitis?

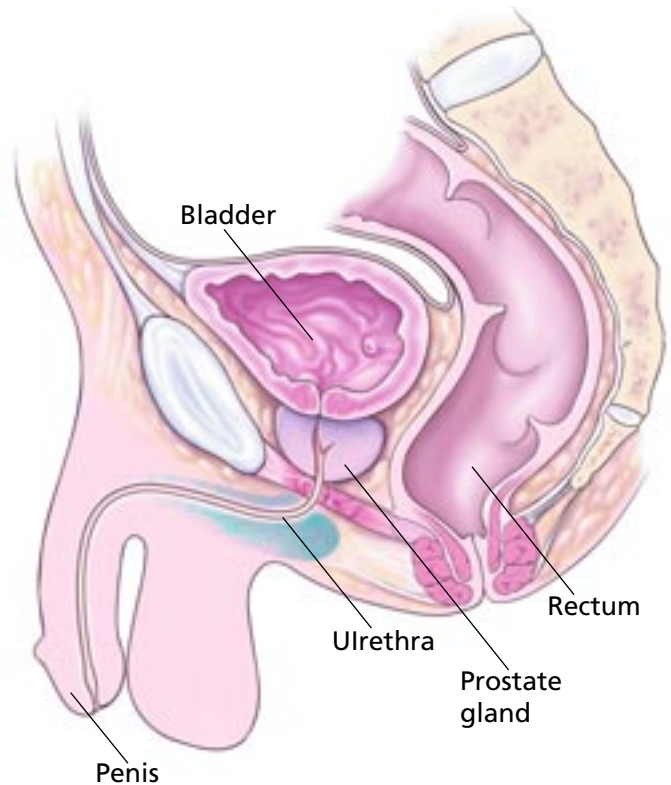
Prostatitis is inflammation (swelling) of the prostate gland. The prostate gland is part of the male reproductive system. It is small—about the size of a walnut—and is located in front of the rectum and below the bladder. The prostate is wrapped around the urethra, which carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. The prostate gland produces part of a thick fluid (called semen) that helps propel sperm through the urethra and out of the penis during sex.

There are three types of prostatitis:

Acute bacterial. “Acute” means that symptoms—typically chills, fever, and low-back pain—appear suddenly and are severe. “Bacterial” means that bacteria are causing the inflammation. Patients may also have a difficult time passing urine.

Chronic bacterial. “Chronic” means that the inflammation is an ongoing problem. Bacteria also cause this type of prostatitis. The most common sign is repeated infections in the bladder or other parts of the urinary system. Other symptoms can include pain during urination, a desire to urinate frequently, and pain in the pelvic area.

Nonbacterial. This is the most common type of prostatitis, and it is not caused by bacteria. In fact, no cause can be found in the majority of cases. Nonbacterial prostatitis may not cause symptoms. But when it does, they may be similar to those of chronic bacterial prostatitis. Men may also have chronic pain in the pelvis or genitals; sometimes the pain is present only during urination.



Prostatitis does not increase your risk of getting other prostate diseases, such as prostate cancer. In addition, you can not pass this disease on to your sexual partner.

Can prostatitis be treated?

Yes, prostatitis is treatable. The treatment depends on the type of prostatitis.

For acute bacterial prostatitis, hospitalization is usually needed for a couple of days. You will probably be asked to:

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■ Take an antibiotic drug for 4 weeks to kill the bacteria; for the first few days, the drug may be given directly into a vein.

■ Take a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as ibuprofen (Motrin, others) to relieve pain and discomfort.

You will receive other supportive care as needed until you are ready to go home.

For chronic bacterial prostatitis, you may be asked to take an antibiotic drug for 1 to 3 months to kill the bacteria, and take an NSAID to relieve any pain and discomfort.

If the disease does not respond to therapy and symptoms severely affect your quality of life, your physician may recommend surgery to remove part or all of your prostate gland.

In nonbacterial prostatitis, treatment is tailored to your specific problems. For example, if pain is the primary symptom, your doctor may prescribe an NSAID and hot sitz baths. If you are having a difficult time urinating, you may be asked to take an alpha-blocker, a drug that helps relax muscle tissue in the bladder and prostate gland.

Nontraditional treatments, such as biofeedback, progressive muscle relaxation, and exercises to stretch the back and pelvic floor, may also help relieve symptoms.

Antibiotic drugs are usually not used to treat this type of prostatitis.

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