

“Understanding Native American Cancer Data in Arizona”

5th Series Topic: Prostate Cancer

You may have been seeing a considerable amount of information about prostate cancer, here is why:

Top 5 Arizona Cancer Mortality Sites for Native American Males, 2016-2020		
Rank	Cancer Site	Avg Annual # of Deaths
1	Liver and Intrahepatic Bile Duct	18
2	Prostate	15
3	Colorectal	14
4	Pancreas	12
5	Lung and Bronchus	11

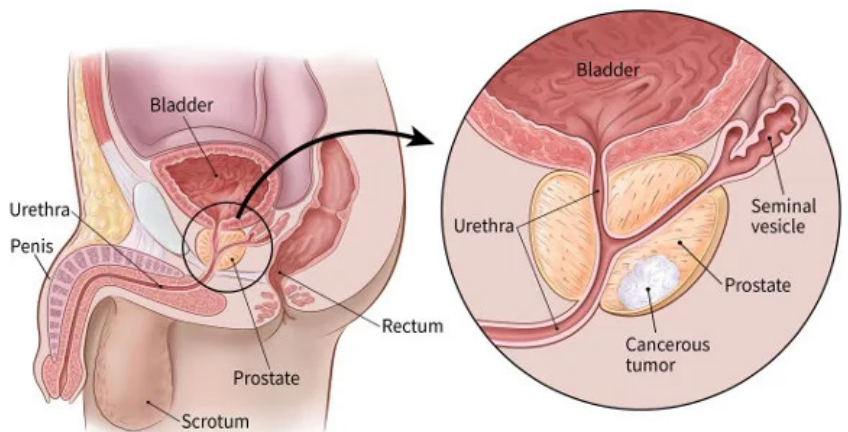
*Data sourced from the Arizona Cancer Registry’s mortality data trends in Arizona’s Native American population from 2016-2020.

Prostate cancer is the **second leading cause of cancer-related death** in Arizona Native American (NA) males. Nationally, NA patients have **more advanced prostate cancer, lower rates of definitive treatment, higher mortality, and reside in areas of less specialty care.** Disparities in access appear to account for excess risks of prostate cancer-specific mortality (PCSM). NA men are also less likely to receive prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing and digital rectal exams from primary care providers than non-Hispanic white men. Therefore, it is imperative that NA males **understand their increased risk, take the proper precautions, and know the signs and symptoms to look out for.**

What exactly is prostate cancer?

Where is the prostate located and what does it do?

- The **prostate** is below the bladder and in front of the rectum.
- Behind the prostate are glands called **seminal vesicles**, which make most of the fluid for semen. The **urethra**, which is the tube that carries urine and semen out of the body through the penis, goes through the center of the prostate.



What is prostate cancer?

- Almost all prostate cancers are **adenocarcinomas**. These cancers develop from the gland cells in the prostate.
- There are other types of cancer that can start in the prostate including, **small cell carcinoma, other neuroendocrine tumors, transitional cell carcinoma, and sarcomas**. These other types of cancer are rare.

Watch Dr. Paul Nguyen from Mass General Brigham explain in more depth [here!](#)

What are the risk factors?

All men are at risk for developing prostate cancer, but there are factors that can increase your risk.

Understanding how these factors apply to you might help you make decisions about screening for prostate cancer.

Unmodifiable factors

- Older age
- Race/ethnicity
- Family history
- Inherited gene changes



Modifiable factors

- Diet
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Chemical exposures
- Inflammation of the prostate
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Vasectomy procedures



What are the signs and symptoms?

Early prostate cancer usually causes no symptoms. While not common, symptoms might include:

- Problems urinating
- Blood in the urine or semen

More advanced prostate cancer can cause additional symptoms, such as:

- Trouble getting an erection
- Pain in the hips, spine, or ribs
- Weakness/numbness in the legs/feet, or loss of bladder or bowel control
- Weight loss
- Feeling very tired

What are the screening recommendations?

Men should have a chance to make an informed decision with their health care provider about whether to be screened for prostate cancer. This discussion should take place at:

- **Age 50 for men who are at average risk** and are expected to live at least 10 more years.
- **Age 45 for men at high risk.** This includes men who have a father or brother diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age (<65).
- **Age 40 for men at even higher risk.** This includes those with more than one first-degree relative who had prostate cancer at an early age.

All that in mind...

Prostate cancer can be found at earlier stage. It is important to be aware of one's risk of prostate cancers and to know the signs and symptoms to look out for. Moreover, it is pivotal for NA communities to know how to reduce their risk.

***Your health is sacred.
Please learn the signs and symptoms to look out for and encourage your relatives to do the same!***