



Overview Of Current Prostate Cancer Treatments: Radical Surgery (Prostatectomy)

Without imaging methods, treatment of prostate cancer is blind. Currently, there is no imaging exist to reliably assess tumor size, spread or the difference between virulent cancer requiring treatment vs. non-aggressive disease that does not. Conventional treatments – such as radical surgery and radiation – are very costly and result in complications, including incontinence and impotence in 50 percent to 80 percent of patients.

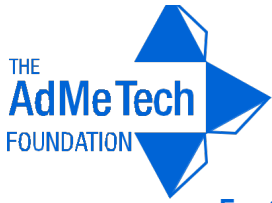
Radical Surgery: Prostatectomy *

- ▶ Radical prostatectomy is the removal of the entire prostate gland.
- ▶ In the early 1990s, roughly 30 percent of prostate cancer patients in the United States were treated by surgery, 30 percent by radiation, and 20 percent by “watchful waiting.”
- ▶ The number of men nationwide receiving radical prostatectomy by 1990 was six times greater than the number recorded for 1984, and the increase was seen in all age groups.

Possible problems *

- ▶ Radical prostatectomy is a complicated and demanding procedure that typically requires general anesthesia and takes 2 to 4 hours, with patient requiring hospitalization for about 3 days.
- ▶ Patients need to wear a tube to drain urine (catheter) for 10 days to 3 weeks.
- ▶ About 5 percent to 10 percent of patients experience surgery-related complications such as bleeding, infection, or heart and lung problems.
- ▶ As with many surgical procedures, there is a small risk of death from surgery, especially among older, frailer patients.
- ▶ Prostatectomy also carries the risk of serious long-term problems, notably urinary incontinence, stool incontinence, and sexual impotence.
- ▶ The procedure also makes it very unlikely for a man to father children, since little ejaculate is produced without the prostate).

* According to the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, (<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/understanding-prostate-cancer-treatment/page5>)



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- ▶ Most men experience urinary incontinence following surgery. A few men permanently lose all urinary control. Some men can be helped with an artificial urinary sphincter, surgically implanted, or with injections of collagen to narrow the bladder opening.
- ▶ Men may also develop stool or fecal incontinence after radical prostatectomy.
- ▶ Many men – especially older men – become impotent. Most men will lose a degree of sexual function.
- ▶ Depending on age, extent of disease, and type of surgery, the chances of impotence vary widely – from 20 percent all the way up to 90 percent.