

IN THIS TOGETHER

Women play a critical role in the fight against prostate cancer. Research shows that nearly two-thirds are the primary healthcare decision makers for their families. For this reason, Prostate Conditions Education Council (PCEC) has developed resources for women about prostate health.



TIPS FOR WOMEN:

- **Encourage prostate cancer screenings:** While prostate cancer is often treatable if detected early, there are frequently no warning signs or symptoms in its earliest stages, making early detection crucial for saving lives. PCEC advises a baseline prostate health assessment, including PSA and digital rectal exam (DRE), for all men at 40 years of age.
- **Promote a healthy life style:** Studies show that eating right, including foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants and exercising may help outcomes after prostate cancer treatment.
- **Research family history:** Men with a first or second degree relative who have had prostate, breast, ovarian, colon or pancreatic cancer are more likely to develop prostate cancer.
- **Chemical Exposure:** Exposure to certain cancer causing chemicals may have higher than average rates of prostate cancer. Veterans and firefighters are just some of the men who are at an increased risk because of these chemicals.
- **Race:** African American men are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer and to die from the disease.
- **Know the numbers:** Keep a list of blood test results. Noticing a slight change in the PSA levels over time may help your doctor recognize the development of prostate cancer. It is important to track all-important numbers including: testosterone, lipids, glucose, etc.

A cancer diagnosis may be the most difficult challenge a man ever has to tackle, but he doesn't have to fight it alone. Women play an important role in helping their loved one manage their prostate cancer. Below are suggestions PCEC has developed to help women support their loved one with prostate cancer.

- **Find & share information:** Learn more about the disease, including treatment options, clinical trials, symptom management and resources (such as care and support services).
- **Ask questions:** Develop a list of questions to ask the doctor, prioritizing them in the order you want to ask.

- **Attend doctor appointments:** Whenever possible attend appointments with your loved one to offer support and to serve as a resource by taking notes and helping to stimulate recollection of your loved one's health history or symptoms.
- **Research a team of specialists:** Get to know the potential specialists, including urologist, radiation oncologist and medical oncologist that can help your loved one manage their condition. Ask his physician about assembling a team to ensure all treatment options are fully explored.
- **Discuss treatment pros and cons:** Help your loved one weigh their treatment options. Be sure to listen and be receptive to your loved ones needs.
- **Identify other allied health professionals:** Ask the medical team about other resources, such as nurses, oncology social workers, home health aides, psychologists, nutritionists and clergy.
- **Provide care & emotional support:** There are many ways that women can support their loved one, including keeping the lines of communication open and encouraging healthier lifestyles. Remember, it takes a team to manage prostate cancer. Ask for help from family and friends and make use of resources available to you through the community, government and prostate cancer organizations. Resources are available in a variety of forms, including support groups, counseling, home care assistance, transportation, financial concerns and more.

PCEC reports that about 60 percent of the men screened are encouraged to do so by the women in their lives and more than half of the appointments are scheduled by women.