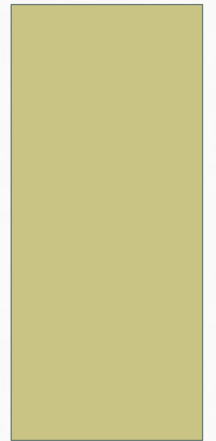


PROSTATE CANCER: MYTHS AND TRUTHS

THE CHILLIWACK FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENTS



I don't need the doctor to check my prostate....I'll get a PSA instead

- **Myth.**
- As per the BC Cancer Agency:
 - "Combining the PSA test and DRE (Digital Rectal Exam) is a more effective means of screening than PSA testing alone"
 - DRE alone may miss 50% of cancers
 - 70% of men with a positive PSA do NOT have cancer.
 - Normal PSA + normal DRE = very low chance of prostate cancer



Why NOT get a PSA.... There's no downside!

- **Myth.**
- The PSA test is the best way to detect prostate cancer at and early stage, when there is a good chance of cure..... but there are some things you should know:
 - If PSA is positive → biopsy → if negative → does not necessarily rule out prostate cancer → may need to be prepared for more testing, more anxiety and more biopsies
 - Can increase worry
 - Could be harmed by unnecessary surgery +/- radiation for low grade, slow growing cancer that you never would have known you had and never would have shown up before you died of old age.
 - Studies are still looking into if PSA testing actually saves lives (decreases mortality) statistically.... Some studies have shown it does, some say it has not.

THEREFOR:

- Encourage all men aged 45-75, with a life expectancy >10 years, to discuss PSA testing with their doctor and make their own decision based on weighing the benefits and risks.

PSA TEST IS NOT COVERED BY MSP FOR SCREENING

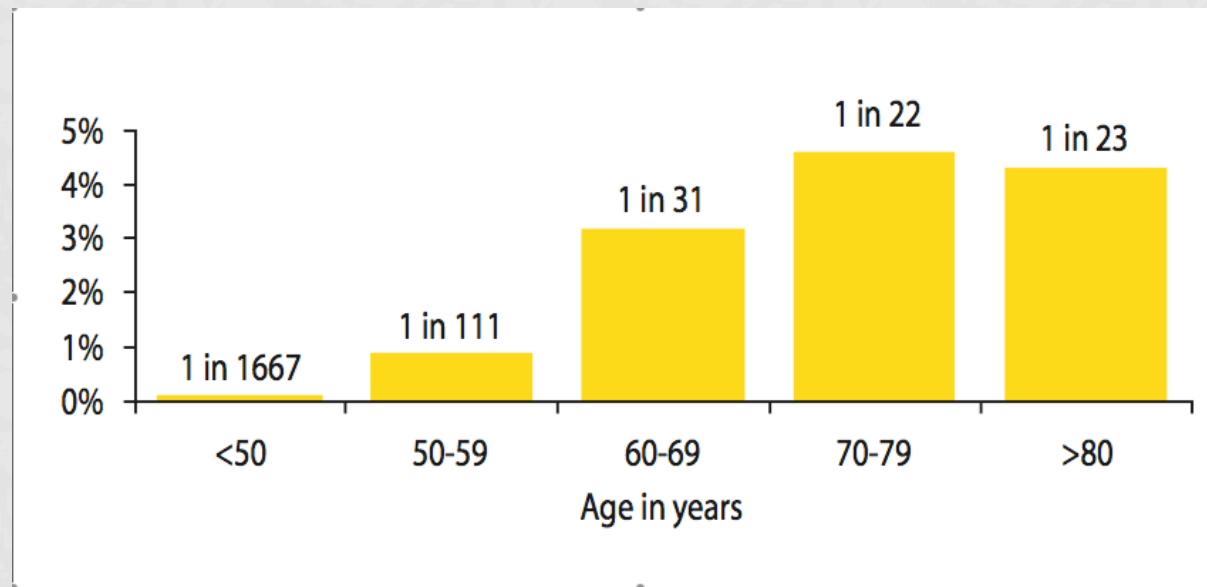
- **Truth.**
- At present, PSA testing is not funded by the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia for men without urinary symptoms, an abnormal prostate examination or a history of prostate cancer.
- The BC Cancer Agency is currently undertaking a cost-effective analysis of PSA screening for the early detection of prostate cancer.

If you don't have any symptoms, you don't have prostate cancer.

- **Myth.**
- Prostate cancer often has no symptoms or they are mistaken for something else
- Signs of prostate cancer are often first detected by a doctor during a routine check-up.
- Common symptoms: Frequent urination, difficulty starting or stopping, weak or interrupted flow, painful or burning urination, ED, painful ejaculation, blood in the urine or semen, or frequent pain and stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE BIGGEST RISK FACTOR FOR PROSTATE CANCER (BESIDES BEING MALE)?

- AGE!
- The risk of developing prostate cancer rises more rapidly with age than any other cancer!



- Risk of developing prostate cancer in the next 5 years based on age

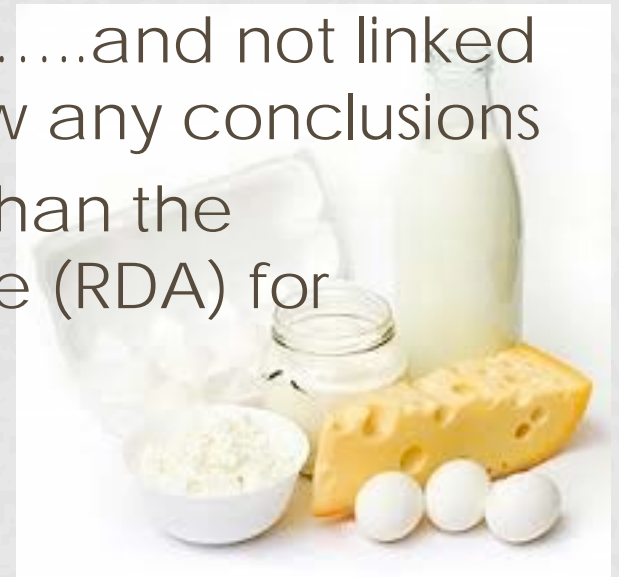
COFFEE CAN PREVENT PROSTATE CANCER

- A little truth, a little myth.
- One recent study found that those who drank 1-5 cups/day = 30% lower risk of lethal prostate cancer than those who drank none.
- One study is not enough to prove that coffee prevents lethal prostate cancer, but is good news for coffee drinkers



DAIRY PRODUCTS CAUSE PROSTATE CANCER

- **Myth (so far)**
- The exact cause of prostate cancer is unknown (and probably multiple factors)
- High intakes of dairy foods → linked in some studies to a higher risk of prostate cancer.....and not linked in others.....too few studies to draw any conclusions
- To play it safe: shoot for no more than the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium:
 - 1000 mg/day up to age 70,
 - then 1200 mg/day



HAVING A VASECTOMY CAUSES PROSTATE CANCER

- **Myth**
- The evidence suggests this is coincidence and that vasectomy is not a risk factor for prostate cancer.

TOMATOES PREVENT PROSTATE CANCER

- **Probably- Truth.**
- The evidence that **foods containing lycopene**, an antioxidant in tomatoes and other red fruits, can reduce risk of prostate cancer has been judged probable by the American Institute for Cancer research
- So.....have at least **5 portions/day** of a wide range of fruits and vegetables
- (Note: it is easier for the body to absorb lycopene from tomatoes once they have been processed or cooked, as into sauces or soups.)



SUPPLEMENTS CAN PREVENT PROSTATE CANCER

- **Probably- Myth.**
- Doctors were excited by studies suggesting that certain nutritional supplements - notably the mineral selenium and vitamin E - could cut the risk for prostate cancer.
- But more recent (and better) research failed to confirm those findings.
- There's no convincing evidence that nutritional supplements can cut a man's prostate cancer risk.



POMEGRANATE JUICE KNOCKS OUT PROSTATE CANCER CELLS

- **That sentence- Truth.**



- Pomegranate juice has been shown to kill prostate cancer cells - in a test tube.
- But there's little reason to think that the juice has the the same effect inside a man's body.
- If you are at high risk for the disease, you could try it, but don't have a false sense of expectation.
- Do not consider any of these alternative benefits a substitute for actual cancer treatment.

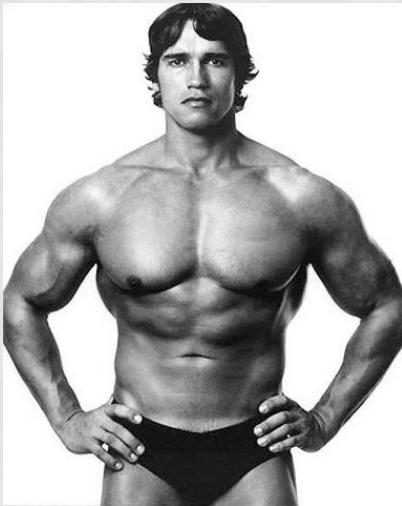
MORE BLACK MEN GET PROSTATE CANCER THAN WHITE MEN

- **Truth.**
- The risk of this cancer is twice as high in black men as in white men.
- North American Asian men have a lower risk than white men.

YOU NEED TO WARN YOUR MALE FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT THEIR RISK OF PROSTATE CANCER

- **Truth**
- Family history can play a role in prostate cancer.
- If a number of male relatives on one side of your family have prostate cancer, especially if they were younger when they got it, you may be at higher risk for prostate cancer.
- Testing for hereditary risk is not yet available.

QUESTION: WHAT PROSTATE CANCER RISK FACTOR DO THESE GUYS HAVE?:



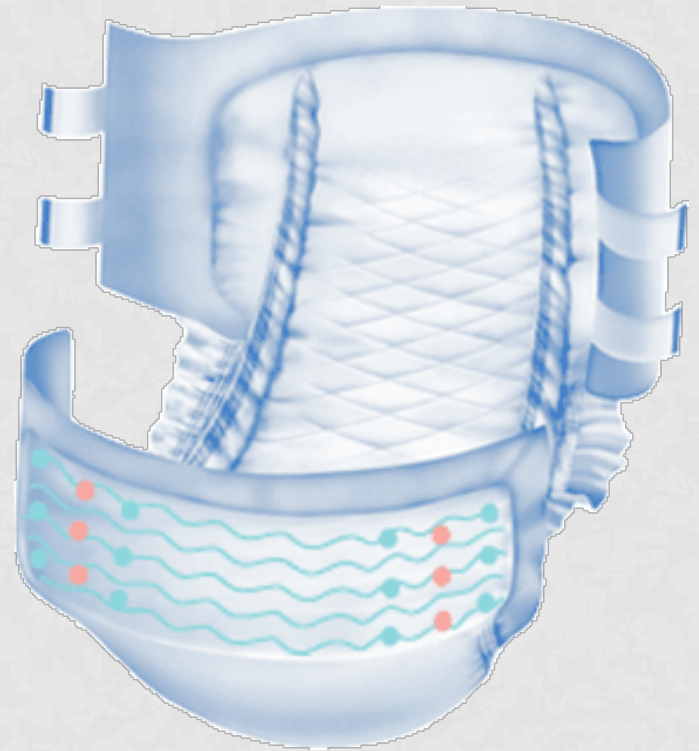
- Increased levels of Testosterone

EVERYONE DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER NEEDS TREATMENT

- **Myth.**
- Frequently restricted to the prostate alone, and may cause no problems.
- In fact, most men with prostate cancer die from other causes.
- It can turn very serious when it invades other parts of the body → discomfort, pain, death.
- An average 50-year-old (expected to live until age 77):
 - 4/10 risk of developing microscopic prostate cancer sometime in his lifetime
 - 1/10 chance of having cancer diagnosed
 - 3 /100 chance of dying of it.

YOU WILL END UP NEEDING TO WEAR ADULT DIAPERS FOR LIFE AFTER A RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY

- **Myth**
- 90-95% do not suffer from any lasting stress incontinence
- 5-10% experience permanent stress incontinence
- 1-5% experience total and permanent incontinence



A RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY (REMOVAL OF THE PROSTATE) SURGERY WILL DIRECTLY RESULT IN DECREASED SEX DRIVE.

- **Myth.**
- 50% of men with the nerve sparing surgery will experience permanent erectile dysfunction
 - 85-90% of them can be helped with medications, etc.
 - They are unable to ejaculate
 - The ability to achieve an orgasm is not affected (these nerves are far away from the prostate)
 - The sex drive also remains intact....(although can be affected psychologically because of everything else.)

RADIATION TREATMENT HAS LESS RISK OF ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

- **Myth**
- In 40-60% of people → the rays cause permanent ED
- Gradual over several months (unlike surgery)
- It also results in significantly less semen
- Orgasm and Sex drive – again spared.

EVERYONE DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER NEEDS TREATMENT

- **Myth.**
- In cancer that is stable or progressing very slowly (especially in men not expected to live more than 10 years)..... no treatment may be necessary.
- Instead the disease should be monitored (watchful waiting).

EXCELLENT REFERENCE TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT:

- [http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/ ABCCA/ NewsCentre/ NewsArchive/ 2003/ PSAbrochure.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/ABCCA/NewsCentre/NewsArchive/2003/PSAbrochure.htm)



BC Cancer Agency
CARE & RESEARCH

The Pros and Cons of PSA Screening for Prostate Cancer

**If you are a man aged 45-75 years
this pamphlet will give you information to
assist you in making an informed decision about
screening using the PSA test (prostate specific antigen)**