Once you have been diagnosed there are many things to consider. Your treatment choice should be based on your personal health and thoroughly discussed with your physician and family. While treatment choices vary, data indicate that every year more men are surviving prostate cancer and winning back their lives. Prostate cancer can be a manageable disease if caught early and treated appropriately. The following are possible treatment options:

- Active surveillance, or "watchful waiting"
- Radiation therapy
  - Interstitial brachytherapy
  - External beam radiation therapy
- Radical prostatectomy
  - Retropubic open radical prostatectomy
  - Perineal radical prostatectomy
  - Robotic-assisted prostatectomy
  - Laparoscopic prostatectomy
- Cryotherapy
- Hormonal therapy
- Chemotherapy

For more information on these treatment options, visit www.KnowYourStats.org.

For more information about life after prostate cancer and other urological conditions, please visit the Urology Care Foundation’s website, www.KnowYourStats.org. The purpose of this document is to encourage a discussion between the patient and his health care provider. This document was developed by the Urology Care Foundation and based on current medical and scientific knowledge. This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please see your urologist or other health care provider regarding any health concerns and always consult a health care professional before you start or stop any treatments including medications.

The Urology Care Foundation is committed to advancing urologic research and education. We collaborate with researchers, health care professionals, patients and caregivers to improve patients’ lives. The Urology Care Foundation is the official foundation of the American Urological Association (AUA) and was formerly known as the AUA Foundation.

The Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and relies on donations to make publications and information such as this guide available to everyone. Please go to www.UrologyHealth.org/Donate today and make an online donation to help us continue this important work. Thank you!

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There are many physical and emotional issues to consider after prostate cancer treatment. It is important to understand how your choice will affect you because every man’s experience is different. Here are some things you will need to consider after you have been treated:

- Pain
- Medication requirement/needs
- Dietary and personal lifestyle changes
- Incontinence
- Erectile dysfunction (ED)

Incontinence and ED are experienced by many men after prostate cancer treatment.

**How common is urinary incontinence after prostate cancer treatment?**

Urinary incontinence can occur with any form of treatment for localized prostate cancer. Fortunately, most men will ultimately recover urinary control. Long-term incontinence is rare with an occurrence in less than 5-10 percent of all surgical cases.

**What causes ED after prostate cancer treatment?**

Surgery may damage the nerve bundles that control blood flow to the penis, causing ED. Nerves involved in the erection process surround the prostate gland. While most surgeons try to perform a nerve-sparing procedure, it is not always possible. In addition, there could be a decreased amount of blood flowing to the penis after treatment.

Should you experience incontinence or ED, please consult with your physician; there is no reason to suffer in silence.

**How do erections occur?**

Erections begin in the brain where arousal signals are sent to the penile nerves. Nerve impulses relax penile tissue and expand blood vessels. Blood flows into the penis and is trapped, which makes the penis hard and erect.

**What are the different types of incontinence?**

There are several types of incontinence:

1. Stress incontinence, the most common, is urine leakage when coughing, laughing, sneezing or exercising.
2. Overflow incontinence is the inability to empty the bladder completely, taking longer to urinate and when you do urinate, it is not a powerful stream.
3. Urge incontinence is the sudden need to go to the bathroom even when the bladder is not full because the bladder is overly sensitive.
4. Mixed incontinence is a combination of stress and urge incontinence with symptoms from both types.
5. Continuous incontinence, which is not common, is the inability to control urine at any time.

**How long can incontinence last after treatment?**

Improvement in urine control can take several weeks to several months. It varies from patient to patient; your particular recovery could be quick or slow.

**How do you treat incontinence?**

Treatment is based on numerous factors including the type and severity of your incontinence. The following can be used to treat incontinence:

- Kegel exercises
- Lifestyle changes
- Medications
- Neuromuscular electrical stimulation
- Surgery
  - Collagen injections
  - Ureteral sling
  - Artificial sphincter

There are many products that do not treat incontinence but help maintain a high quality of life.