

How Dry I Am...

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Prostate cancer impacts one in six men. It goes without saying that prostate cancer also directly impacts the companion and family members of those same men. His loved ones also experience the fear, frustration, and uncertainty of a prostate cancer diagnosis, subsequent treatment and the possible resulting side-effects. We also know that you – the wives, girlfriends, and mothers – are often the direct link for him to health-related information. So, listen up ladies for important news.

Currently, any treatment option for localized prostate cancer has a chance of causing challenging side effects, with one of the most common being urine leakage or incontinence. This includes such treatment options as radical prostatectomy (surgery), external beam radiation, internal beam radiation (also known as brachytherapy or “seeds”) or cryosurgery (where the prostate is frozen with cooling probes). Importantly, the incidence of this complication has gradually declined, but remains dependent on a patient’s age and the experience of the surgeon.

Dr. Gerald W. Chodak, MD, a urologist specializing in prostate cancer and prostate disease at the Midwest Prostate and Urology Health Center in Chicago, suggests “patients choosing their doctor should never be afraid to ask: “How many [procedures] have you done in the last 3 years, how many in my age group have any incontinence and how did you assess this information” because not enough doctors actually score their results.”

When faced with prostate cancer treatment decisions, some men chose inaction over this possible side effect, allowing ego and perception to rule their thinking. The potential side effects weigh heavily and often take precedence over common sense. Those, however, who actively discuss treatment options with their physician and supportive loved-ones are generally better informed, choosing effective treatment over inaction. When looking into the eyes of their family and loved ones, the possible side effects are weighed on very different scales. With the love and support of that family, most men will chose life-saving treatment and squarely face the potential resulting side-effects.

Incontinence and prostate cancer treatment

While many men face temporary urine leakage after a radical prostatectomy, persistent leakage is not uncommon. Between 24-56 percent of men wear incontinence pads one year after prostate surgery. As you can imagine, this can be sobering and emotionally devastating. Many men comment that the medical, psychological, social and financial consequences are the most-challenging part of prostate cancer. As supportive loved ones, we share the consequences, frustration and fear.

At the same time, THERE IS HOPE!

There are many solutions available today to once again help him to live an active, unburdened, and dry life. Solutions include:

- ◆ Absorbent products – pads, diapers and garments can help individuals to deal with bladder control problems.
- ◆ Pelvic Muscle Exercises & Bladder Control Techniques – these can help strengthen the muscles, reduce urgency and prevent urine leakage.
- ◆ Electrical stimulants – home and office treatments designed to strength the pelvic muscles and make the bladder less irritable.
- ◆ Biofeedback – techniques that train men to accurately control their pelvic muscles and prevent leakage.
- ◆ Medications – Daily medication that can help reduce urgency and urge-related leakage.
- ◆ Surgical solutions – a simple procedure that implant a small easy-to-use device that prevents urine leakage.

Those who are successful at reclaiming a dry life-style are those who receive encouragement and support from their family and friends, as well as a safe

place to discuss fears and concerns. Encourage him to consult an urologist specializing in incontinence for further details about these and other solutions. In fact, why not accompany him to the appointment and offer support?



New FREE Resource for Incontinence Solutions

To receive a free copy of

“Prostate Cancer and Incontinence: Coping Strategies and Treatment Options,” call Us TOO International at 630-795-1002 or visit www.ustoo.org.

Join us in celebrating and supporting prostate cancer survivors and their families!

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