BPH: Help for this common disorder

Mary Connolly | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Most men are happy to talk about the MPG (miles per gallon) on their vehicle. Or, the ERA (earned run average) of their favorite pitcher.

But, men often shy away from discussing BPH, even though it’s one of the most common health disorders faced by men aged 50 and older. The problem affects more than 40 to 50 percent of men aged 51 to 60, and by the time men are in their 80s, more than 80 percent will suffer from the disease.

Medically, BPH refers to the condition, benign prostatic hyperplasia. More commonly, it's called an enlarged prostate.

Symptoms of BPH include getting up during the night to go to the bathroom or making frequent bathroom trips to urinate, weak stream and hesitancy (difficulty in starting urination). The symptoms can be irritating, frustrating and inconvenient, but they can also be a sign of a more serious problem, even cancer.

The prostate is located at the base of the bladder and surrounds the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder through the penis). This gland serves a critical role in reproduction, helping keep urine from infiltrating semen during ejaculation. The prostate also helps by secreting prostaglandins, which are a protective barrier to help the sperm travel through the vagina and cervix, increasing the chance of pregnancy.

As men age, the prostate naturally grows larger – usually this begins sometime after age 50. As the prostate grows larger, it places increased pressure on the urethra, which can lead to a variety of symptoms – and ultimately benign prostatic hyperplasia, commonly known as BPH.

Some men find it embarrassing and difficult to talk with their doctor about issues that affect both urination and sex, even though the condition is common. Once the condition is identified, an appropriate treatment plan can be started that can alleviate symptoms.

Here are the urinary symptoms that might indicate you have BPH:

- Frequency (feeling the need to urinate often)
- Nocturia (getting up during the night to urinate)
- Urgency (needing to get to the bathroom quickly)
- Incontinence (inability to hold urine)
- Weak stream
- Dribbling
- Hesitancy
- Intermittency (interruption in urinary flow)
- Straining or a feeling of incomplete emptying

Men who have any of these symptoms should seek an evaluation from a urologic specialist. Tests to determine the cause of these symptoms include a digital rectal exam, post-void residual test to determine residual urine, cystoscopy (viewing the bladder with a scope), and ultrasound.

After a diagnosis has been made, the urologist and patient can decide upon an appropriate course of action.

To learn more about men’s health services at Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center, call (614) 293-9253 or another Ohio State urologist, call (614) 293-9253.

PSA Check

Men over age 40 should talk with their family physician or their urologist about the benefits and disadvantages of an annual PSA check. PSA, which stands for prostate-specific antigen, can be measured through a simple blood test by the family doctor. Low PSA levels typically signal that a man does not have prostate problems. As men age and the prostate enlarges, the PSA test can be a way to detect prostate cancer at an early stage, when it is most treatable. Increased PSA levels don’t necessarily require treatment – in fact, many men live with increased PSA levels for years without experiencing any symptoms of prostate cancer. However, having a historical record of this information can help you and your doctor determine if further evaluation is needed and can help you stay healthy longer.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with a urologic specialist at Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center, call (614) 293-9253 or visit urology.osu.edu.

Improving heart and vascular emergency care

Marti Leitch | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Patients in need of emergency heart or vascular care may benefit from a new program based at the OSU Ross Heart Hospital of Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center.

This spring, Ohio State became the first in the state and among only four healthcare institutions in the nation with a program designed to speed care for critically ill heart and vascular patients. Modeled closely after Ohio State’s successful initiative to streamline care for ST-segment myocardial infarction (STEMI), the most serious form of heart attack, the newly launched program includes other heart and vascular emergencies. The program, called the Level I Heart and Vascular Emergency program, aims to improve care for patients with a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm, acute aortic dissection, acute limb ischemia and cardiogenic shock.

“We have integrated our STEMI alert program, we have reduced patient transfer times and increased heart attack survival rates,” says Raymond Magorien, MD, a cardiologist who is director of the Level I Heart and Vascular Emergency program. “Now we are applying many of the same efficiency and quality improvements to further bolster our care for critically ill heart and vascular patients.”

Ohio State’s Level I team works closely with referring hospitals, emergency medical service providers, the emergency department and other patient care areas to provide fast and easy access to treatment. The team establishes protocols with referring hospitals for quickly assessing a cardiovascular emergency and initiating a patient transfer. With one phone call, surgeons, cardiologists, nurses and imaging technologists are mobilized to prepare for the arriving patient.

“No matter how good a system is between a regional and an academic hospital, there is always room to improve, and we are excited to create this program that will coordinate and speed access to lifesaving cardiac care in Ohio and surrounding areas,” says Magorien.
The symbiosis of research and education

Ginny Halloran | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Research and education enjoy a symbiotic relationship at Ohio State’s College of Medicine. Increased research funding has provided the technology and resources to support our scientific experts and to offer new educational opportunities for MD, pre-doctoral and doctoral students. These opportunities will help ensure that Ohio State, Ohio and the nation have the scientific expertise required to investigate and answer the next generation of health challenges.

“This past year, we have had major success in securing competitive funding to support both our research and academic missions. However, we still have much more work to do to create both a physical and fiscal environment that will propel us into the ranks of the Top 20 U.S. medical schools,” says Dean Charles J. Lockwood, MD, MHCM.

In 2011, the College was awarded highly coveted funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to propel education of medical and doctoral students in both clinical medicine and basic science research. Ohio State’s new Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), a designation given only to combined MD/PhD programs receiving NIH support, offers an integrated curriculum and provides rigorous training in both biomedical research and clinical medicine necessary for achievement of both degrees.

Nationally, there are 44 NIH-funded Medical Scientist Training Programs. Each of the Top 20 medical schools and research institutions, as ranked by U.S. News & World Report, has such a program.

“This exclusive award enables expansion of existing opportunities and programming for our medical students,” says Larry Schlesinger, MD, director of the MSTP at Ohio State. “As a result of this prestigious award, we expect our applicant pool to grow in both number and quality.”

In addition to intense clinical and basic science training, the MSTP program offers a flexible and customized graduate curriculum centered on the goals and interests of the individual student; independent study pathways for medical school curriculum; a strong student community; generous stipends and tuition waivers; and research and mentoring opportunities with Ohio State’s physician scientists.

Additional NIH funding supports the College of Medicine’s new SUCCESS (Summer Undergraduate Course Creating Excellence in Scientific Study) program (see story on this page).

Since 2009, the College has also been a member of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Med into Grad Initiative, which seeks to advance fundamental knowledge in biomedical sciences and the application of that knowledge to alleviate disease and promote health. The Med into Grad Initiative is designed to prepare PhD-trained scientists to conduct research at the interface of biomedical science and clinical medicine.

Graduates of programs are expected to expedite the clinical application of discoveries in biomedical science to improve human health and to create future successful research partnerships with physicians.

The program focuses on six scientific areas: genetics, microbial biology, biomedical engineering, RNA biology, neuroscience and computational biology. The core leadership team of Ohio State’s Med into Grad Initiative includes: Joanna Groden, PhD; Ginny Bumgardner, MD, PhD; Carlo Croce, MD; Larry Schlesinger, MD; Richard Hart, PhD; Daniel Schoenberg, PhD; John Oberdick, PhD; Jeff Parvin, MD, PhD; Virginia Sanders, PhD; and Rebecca Jackson, MD.

The newly launched SUCCESS (Summer Undergraduate Course Creating Excellence in Scientific Study) Program welcomed its inaugural class on June 11. Created by our Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), this nine-week program supports students interested in biomedical research by enhancing their laboratory experience and providing valuable professional development courses. Ohio State’s 20 SUCCESS students represent a cross-section of excellence from diverse backgrounds: 18 undergraduate institutions from 13 states are represented; 11 incoming students are from under-represented in medicine groups; and 14 students are female. Three students hold MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) Fellowships, a prestigious National Institutes of Health award available to minority students interested in research. SUCCESS students are encouraged to set their sights on MD/PhD or graduate training programs at Ohio State or at other top-tier institutions of biomedical research.

But for Ohio State, men might remain silent about their healthcare needs. The experts at Ohio State treat a variety of health conditions specific to men, including:

- Urethral strictures
- Male incontinence
- Erectile dysfunction
- Peyronie’s Disease
- Low testosterone
- BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia/enlarged prostate)
- Male infertility
- Disorders of orgasm
- Hidden penis
- Low sperm count
- Low sexual drive

Our patient appointments ensure enough time for answering questions and discussing topics important to you. A personalized treatment plan can be established in as little as one office visit. Ohio State physicians collaborate with other specialists (Cardiology, Ob/Gyn, Oncology and Family Medicine) to make sure you receive the best care and coordination of care possible.

Schedule an appointment with one of our specialists today, by calling 614-293-9253.