

Prostate Cancer

Prostate Cancer in the U.S.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among U.S. men, accounting for 33% of all cancer cases in males. According to the 1998 American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures*, an estimated 184,500 men in the U.S. were diagnosed with prostate cancer and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reports that 32,203 men died from this disease. Prostate cancer is primarily a disease of older men. The rate doubles every ten years after the age of 40. In the 1970's and 1980's prostate cancer incidence rose steadily, but since 1992 has decreased. Some of the increase in cases may have been due to finding more cases at an earlier stage, through screening and routine surgeries. Since the early 1990's the mortality rates have also decreased. However, deaths from prostate cancer in African American men remain over twice as high as White men.

Older age is the biggest risk factor for prostate cancer.

Men aged 50 years or older with no risk factors should talk with their health care providers about being screened for prostate cancer.

Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer

- As with many cancers, **older age** is the biggest risk factor for prostate cancer.
- Prostate enlargement (benign prostatic hypertrophy) may increase the risk for some men.
- A history of prostate cancer in a close family member may also increase an individual's risk.
- Recent steady increases in prostate cancer incidence and mortality suggest that some environmental factors, such as dietary animal fat, may play a role, but these are not definite.

Prevention of Prostate Cancer

It is not yet clearly understood how best to prevent prostate cancer. Early detection may be the best strategy for reducing the chances of dying from this disease. Recent research indicates that a **high intake of certain fruits and vegetables** may decrease the risk of prostate cancer.

Early Detection of Prostate Cancer

Why is early detection important?

- Cases detected early (local disease) have about a 100% chance of living for at least five more years.
- Cases detected at the distant stage (when disease has spread to another part of the body) have only a 34% chance of living for five more years.

How to Improve your Chances of Detecting Prostate Cancer Early

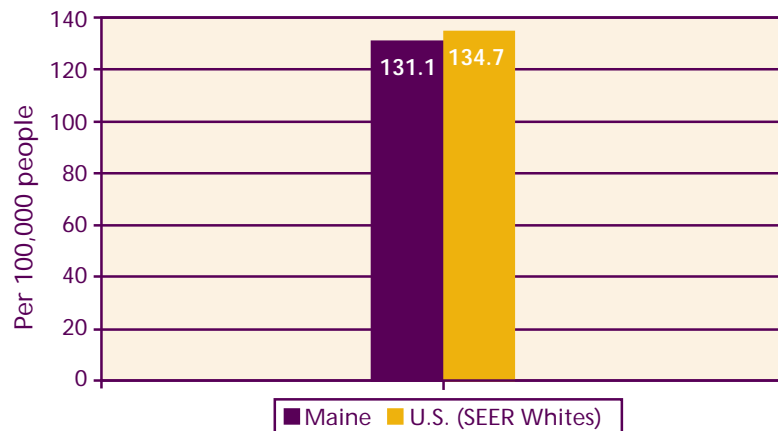
- Men aged 50 years or older with **no risk factors** should talk with their health care providers about being screened for prostate cancer with a **digital rectal exam and blood test (PSA)**.
- Men **with risk factors**, such as a family history of prostate cancer, may want to talk with their providers about being **screened earlier**.

Burden of Prostate Cancer in Maine

- In 1997 and 1998 an average of 944 cases of prostate cancer were diagnosed each year.
- On average, 152 men died from prostate cancer each year during this time period.
- Over 88% of prostate cancer cases occur in men over 60 years old.

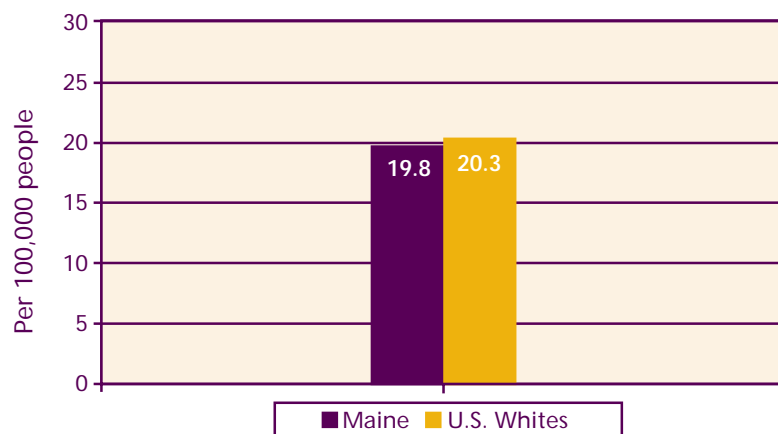
The age-adjusted incidence rate for prostate cancer in Maine is similar to the U.S. rate.

Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates, Maine and U.S.
Prostate Cancer, 1997-1998



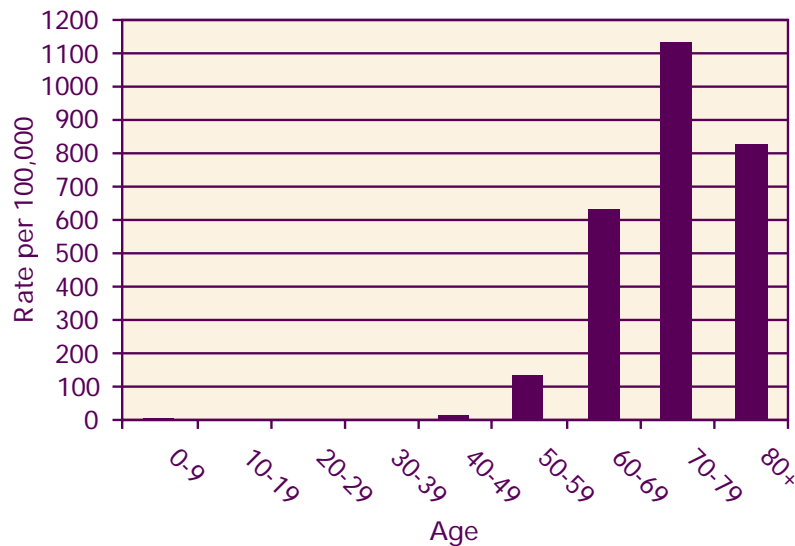
The age-adjusted mortality rate for prostate cancer is not statistically different from the U.S. rate.

Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates, Maine and U.S.
Prostate Cancer, 1997-1998



As with most types of cancer, prostate cancer is more common as people age. In Maine, the rate of new cases rises dramatically after age 60.

**Maine Age-Specific Incidence Rates
Prostate Cancer, 1997-1998**



Within Maine, the incidence rate is significantly higher in Androscoggin County than the rest of the state. (See Incidence Rates, page 43, for 95% confidence intervals.)

Maine = 131.1
National (SEER¹ Whites) = 134.7

¹ Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results

Maine Age-Adjusted Prostate Cancer Incidence Rates by County 1997-1998

