

Winning the battle together

CHI FRANCISCAN OFFERS SCREENING AND HIGH-TECH CARE TO HELP MEN BEAT PROSTATE CANCER

COULD YOU HAVE CANCER AND NOT KNOW IT? For men, it's common for early stage prostate cancer to progress without symptoms. This makes the disease more likely to advance before you know something is wrong. Fortunately, prostate cancer screenings can lead to earlier detection at a more treatable stage.

The PSA blood test and digital rectal exam (DRE) are two screening tools used at Franciscan to check for red flags that could indicate cancer. If either of these screenings produces suspicious results the next step is an ultrasound-guided biopsy said Dean Mastras, MD, radiation oncologist at Tacoma Radiation Oncology. Your age, race and family medical



Dean Mastras, MD

history are some of the factors that determine when you should begin discussing screening options with your doctor. Typically screening begins between the ages of 40 to 50.

The power of screening

Olympia resident George Madsen can attest to the importance of screening. In December 2013 his doctor found a lump during his annual physical which included a DRE. A biopsy subsequently revealed prostate cancer. "It was eye-opening," George said. "It put my own mortality front and center."

Researching options

The initial step of trying to figure out what comes next after diagnosis is one of the hardest, said Dr. Mastras. In cases where treatment is necessary, every man has choices. But which choice is best for you?

There is a lot of information to consider and sometimes the abundance of data can be overwhelming, Dr. Mastras acknowledged. For George, researching every option to the extent possible was important, but it became frustrating as he frequently encountered biased information. After traveling to various specialists and reading a lot of research on his own, his pursuit for information led him to Dr. Mastras.

During a three-hour consultation Dr. Mastras shared well-graphed, long-term data with George that compared research looking at men of similar age and stage and grade of disease. "I try to stay away from biases. Falling back on the data and outcomes is the best way to consult patients," Dr. Mastras said. George appreciated his approach. His concerns about side effects and the possibility that the cancer would return after his treatment ended were addressed by Dr. Mastras in a factual, compassionate manner.

"Dr. Mastras comes across as very human, very down to earth, and has a great sense of humor. I appreciate that. It is already a tough enough situation coming to grips with the 'C' word," said George. "Dr. Mastras put me at ease."

Cancer care is provided by CHI Franciscan and a network of expert partners including: Tacoma Radiation Oncology, Virginia Mason, Northwest Medical Specialties, TRA Medical Imaging, and the Puget Sound Institute of Pathology.

Olympia resident George Madsen teamed up with CHI Franciscan Health to beat prostate cancer.



If you need to fight the battle, let us help you win. Contact Franciscan Cancer Center at 1-888-825-3227 or visit CHIfranciscan.org.

Another concern for men: testicular cancer

Prostate cancer isn't the only "manly cancer" that men should be concerned about. While a man's chance of being diagnosed with testicular cancer is low — only about 1 in 270 develops the disease. But when testicular cancer does occur, it tends to strike in younger men. While this disease can affect males of all ages, about half of all men diagnosed with testicular cancer are between ages 20 and 34.

Performing a self-exam can help lead to early detection of testicular cancer — often a lump is the first sign, although swelling, breast tenderness and early puberty are also possible symptoms.

During or immediately after a shower is the best time to perform a self-exam because the skin of the scrotum is relaxed. Check one testicle at a time by rolling it between your fingers, looking and feeling for lumps or any changes in size, shape or feel of the testicles.

Testicular cancer can typically be treated successfully. Talk with your doctor if you find a suspicious lump or other concern.