

# THE Wellness Minute

Nutrition Series: 4.0  
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## Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy, Part 1

### What Is Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy?

Swelling of the prostate gland and elevated prostate specific antigen (PSA) are the latest conditions targeted by the pharmaceutical industry in their media blitz advertising campaign. Their goal is clearly to reach the millions of men suffering the discomfort and dysfunction of benign prostate diseases and to mobilize anxiety about the 30,000 men who die annually from prostate cancer. The awareness of the problem is good... but are drugs and surgery our only or our wisest choices?

Benign (non-cancerous) Prostate Hypertrophy (BPH) alone contributes to over one billion dollars spent annually in pursuit of relief for symptoms of:

- Awakening from sleep to urinate a number of times per night.
- Feeling the bladder is not empty and frequent urination.
- Difficulty beginning urination.



While these symptoms are inconvenient, embarrassing and uncomfortable they are not immediately life threatening like heart attack or stroke.

Benign Prostate Hypertrophy (BPH) is

simply prostate gland swelling which is commonly related to an inflammation and/or infection of the lower urinary tract and prostate. This swelling leads to incomplete emptying of the bladder while increasing the risk of urinary tract infection. This vicious cycle of swelling, urinary retention, and infection causes a worsening of symptoms, sometimes even leading to prostate cancer.

### What Is The PSA Test and How Important Is It?

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) is a protein that increases in the blood of men with various conditions of the prostate, including hypertrophy, inflammation, infection and cancer. It is NOT a specific indicator of cancer, merely an indicator of prostate tissue stress. Fueled by media frenzy and fear of prostate cancer, men often are counseled to aggressively pursue diagnostic studies and treatment of elevated PSA. But **research shows that 85% of the time a man has an increase in PSA it is due to inflammation and infections of the prostate gland that have gone untreated and unsupported by healthful choices... not cancer!**

### How Does Lifestyle Affect The Incidence of BPH?

Research in China shows that men in rural areas have very low rates of clinical BPH, while men living in cities adopting a western lifestyle have a skyrocketing incidence of this condition (though it is still below rates seen in the West). Men who lead a western lifestyle have a much higher incidence of symptomatic BPH than men who lead a traditional or rural lifestyle. In part 2 we will discuss some lifestyle changes that will support a healthy prostate.