Prostate Health News

Prevention, treatment and a new test

May 24, 2006 By Glenn Ellis

Few diseases strike fear in a man's heart like prostate cancer, and African-American men suffer disproportionately. Still, we can take steps to take command of our health.

Prevention.
A high-fat diet containing lots of red meat raises one's prostate cancer risk. Eat fewer burgers and bacon; consume more low-fat foods, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains; drink fewer than two alcoholic beverages daily (24 ounces of beer, ten of wine or three of liquor); eat foods high in lycopenes, such as tomatoes, watermelon and pink grapefruit; and eat soy products, like soy beans, soy milk, tofu and veggie burgers.

Herbal treatment.
A study published in the February 9, 2006 *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) indicates that saw palmetto, a berry extract that millions of men use to treat prostate dysfunction, does not shrink an enlarged prostate, known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). However, a 1992 study published in European Urology found that saw palmetto does effectively treat BPH symptoms, including painful urination, and that it inhibits cancer-causing hormones and can shrink an enlarged prostate in mild to moderate cases. Look for extracts that are standardized to contain 85% to 95% fatty acids and sterols—the berry's medicinal ingredients. Take 160 milligrams twice daily.

On the horizon.
A study in the September 22, 2005 *NEJM* announced a new test that is more accurate in screening for prostate cancer than the current prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. The new screening, known as the 22-biomarker test, is used in combination with the PSA exam and may protect thousands of men from unnecessary prostate biopsies and surgery.

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