

NBA Star Alonzo Mourning Cancer-Free After Surgery to Remove Prostate

Mourning urges other men to undergo routine checkups and blood tests for prostate cancer.

June 12, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

NBA Hall of Fame center Alonzo Mourning is cancer-free after undergoing surgery to remove his [prostate](#) following a Stage III [cancer diagnosis](#), according to [ESPN](#). Now, he's urging others to get screened.

A seven-time All-Star and Olympic gold medalist, Mourning credits [routine prostate screening](#) for his early prostate cancer diagnosis and [treatment](#). After the removal of his prostate, additional tests showed that the cancer had not spread beyond his prostate. He has been cancer-free since the procedure.



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A post shared by Alonzo Mourning (@iamzo33)

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American men after lung cancer, according to the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS). Although the rate of prostate cancer death has declined by about half from 1993 to 2013 thanks to earlier detection and advances in treatment, the death rate has stabilized in recent years.

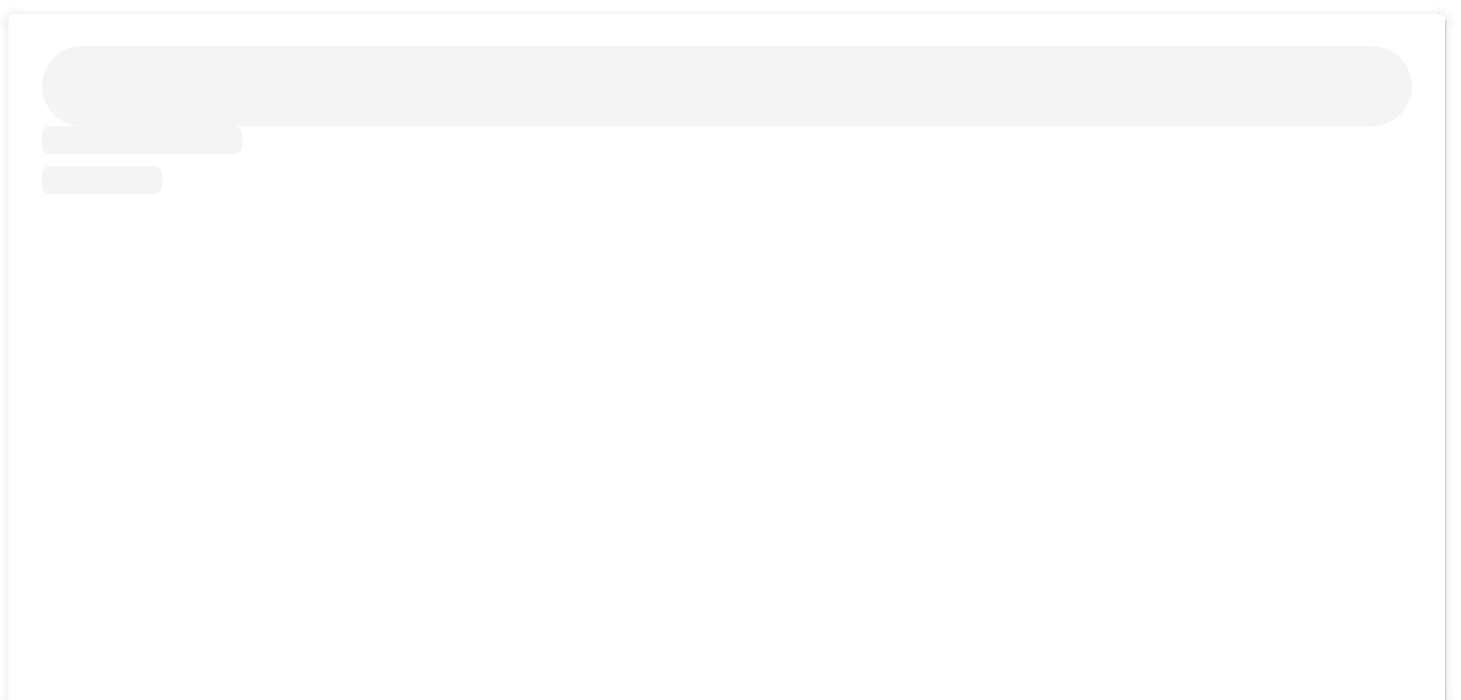
About one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. This year, the ACS estimates that about 299,101 people will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. The five-year relative survival rate after localized and regionalized prostate cancer treatment is 99%.

The prostate is a small organ about the size of a walnut and located below the bladder. A part of the male reproductive system, its main function is to produce and help transport seminal fluid.

Mourning, 54, plans to advocate for prostate cancer screening and encourage Black men and men with a family history of prostate cancer ages 45 and older to undergo regular PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood tests.

“What scares me about this disease is that there are so many men walking around feeling great and have that cancer in them and they don’t know it,” Mourning told ESPN. “The only way to find out is to get their blood tested and get their PSA checked.”

The Miami Heat player knows all too well the importance of regular health screenings. At the height of his basketball career in 2000, he had a routine physical that showed abnormalities in his kidneys. [Soon thereafter he was diagnosed with a kidney disease](#) and underwent a kidney transplant in 2003. He has since been a proud kidney health advocate and shares his story to raise awareness about kidney disease.





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When Mourning's doctor told him about his high PSA score this year, indicating a high grade of prostate cancer, he was shocked because he felt healthy and wasn't experiencing any symptoms.

"I can't tell you enough about how well my body felt," he said. "I was in top-notch shape—running sprints, strong."

In most cases, early-stage prostate cancer, when tumors are small, causes few or no symptoms. As cancer progresses, some men may experience symptoms including:

- A frequent urge to urinate
- Difficulty urinating
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Difficulty getting an erection
- Pain in the lower back and hips.

"Life was good and amazing for me, but if I had ignored getting checked and let this go, the cancer would've spread through my body," Mourning said.

"Unfortunately, as men, we don't like to go to the doctor, but this is the only way to find out what's going on in your body," he said. "We live in a world where it's taboo among men to talk about health issues. If I didn't get routine checkups, I probably wouldn't be here to talk about this. I want men to be proactive with their health."

Mourning isn't the only public figure speaking out about prostate cancer. [Seinfeld star Michael Richards, aka Kramer, recently shared](#) that he had surgery to remove his prostate. And earlier this year, [Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin went public](#) with his prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment.

To read more, click [#Prostate Cancer](#) or read Cancer Health's [Basics on Prostate Cancer](#). It reads in part:

What is prostate cancer?

Cancer develops when cells grow out of control. Prostate cancer is a typically slow-growing cancer of the prostate gland, a walnut-sized organ located under the bladder and in front of the rectum. But in some cases, the cancer can grow rapidly and spread beyond the prostate, a process known as metastasis.

What are the risk factors for prostate cancer?

The major risk factors for prostate cancer are genetics and family history. Studies looking at the link between prostate cancer and a diet high in red meat, chemical exposures including smoking, sexually transmitted infections and having had a vasectomy have produced conflicting results.

What is prostate cancer screening?

Doctors primarily use two tests to screen for prostate cancer: the PSA blood test and the digital rectal exam, in which a finger is inserted into the rectum to feel for lumps or swelling of the prostate.

[Experts disagree about when prostate cancer screening should be done](#). Because it usually grows slowly, most men with prostate cancer will die of other causes, and early treatment carries some risks. The American Cancer Society recommends that at age 50, men should discuss the risks and benefits of screening with their doctor and make an individual decision. African-American men and those with a family history of prostate cancer should start this discussion sooner, at 45 or even 40.