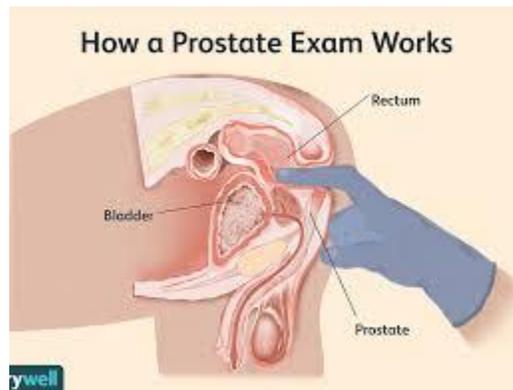


The prostate may be small, but it is especially important. It is so important that a large part of modern urological practice revolves around it. Even her name exuded a sense of importance. It can be traced all the way back to Ancient Greece and literally means "someone standing in front of something or someone." The famous historian Herodotus used the word "prostate" to distinguish the leader of the army, and the philosopher Plato called the head of state.

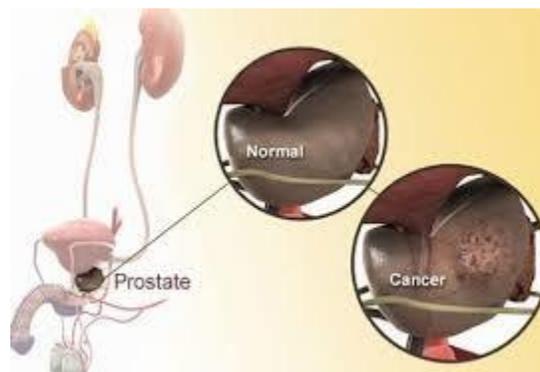
### Anatomy and function of the prostate

10 out of 10 urologists would confirm that the prostate is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum, and its normal size is the size of a walnut. A curious fact is that at one time the prostate was completely absent from the anatomy atlas. Even the most prominent anatomical illustrators, such as Leonardo da Vinci, did not paint it because they did not suspect its existence.



In fact, Herodotus, Plato, and Leonardo were, as we all are in this world, thanks to the prostate! It makes its reproductive contribution in the form of secretion, which facilitates the movement of sperm and provides them with valuable nutrients. To make one last intriguing reference to the past, we will say that even after the discovery of the prostate, the healers of the time were not very sure what it was for.

Some doctors believed that it served as a filter for semen. Others insisted that her secretion was a kind of lubricant for the urethra. Others were convinced that the semen itself was produced in it. Fourth, on the other hand, were of the opinion that a man's sexual pleasure increased under her influence. Today we know that the third and fourth had some right. Few men are aware of this fact, but most of the ejaculate (the fluid secreted during ejaculation) comes from the prostate, and a very small proportion of it is actually semen coming from the testicles. Also, the prostate is rich in nerve endings, which makes it very sensitive. And erogenous, say acquaintances...



### The most common prostate problems

The prostate is also important because of the problems it can create for us. You may know that testosterone affects growth - not only of muscles, but also of the prostate. Under its influence during puberty, the prostate gland increases in weight and size up to eight times, and between the ages of 21 and 50 it doubles. This growth continues after the age of 50, when it has the greatest risk of causing us complaints. The most common prostate problems are three:



Inflammatory, called prostatitis, which may be due to infection, but not necessarily.

**Malignant** - prostate cancer, the second most common malignancy in men in Bulgaria.

**Benign** - benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

### Diagnosis of BPH

Of course, none of these symptoms mean that you suffer from a benign enlarged prostate. This condition should be diagnosed by a urologist, no matter how difficult and awkward a visit to him. To reduce any worries, here's what you can expect from your visit to the doctor:

**Conversation:** an extremely important point, as it allows the urologist to get acquainted with the specific complaints. A special questionnaire (International Prostate Symptom Index) is used to assess symptoms. It is also used to account for the effect of treatment.

**Ultrasound:** a quick, easy, safe and painless examination that allows the doctor to get a clear idea not only about the prostate, but also about the condition of the bladder and kidneys.

**Rectal swabbing:** this is an invaluable method by which the urologist determines the density, motility and consistency of the prostate.

**Prostate specific antigen (PSA) test:** a pure blood test, which is also very important as it is an easy and quick way to assess the risk of prostate cancer. Every man over 50 should test this marker annually.