

# Evolution of Prostatectomy's Impact on Health and Recovery after Surgery

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## DESCRIPTION

Prostatectomy is a surgical procedure involving the removal of part or all of the prostate gland, a small organ located below the bladder and surrounding the urethra. The prostate plays a key role in the male reproductive system by producing seminal fluid, which nourishes and transports sperm. Prostatectomy is most commonly performed to treat two main conditions: Prostate cancer and Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). The surgical approach, type of procedure, and recovery time can vary significantly depending on the underlying condition and the patient's overall health.

## Types of prostatectomy

The two main types of prostatectomy are radical prostatectomy and simple prostatectomy. Radical prostatectomy involves the complete removal of the prostate gland along with surrounding tissues and is most often performed in cases of prostate cancer:

**Radical prostatectomy:** Radical prostatectomy is further divided into open, laparoscopic, and robotic-assisted approaches. In open radical prostatectomy, the surgeon makes a large incision in the lower abdomen to access the prostate and remove it. This traditional method is effective but often comes with a longer recovery time and a higher risk of complications. Advances in surgical technology have led to the development of laparoscopic prostatectomy, in which small incisions are made, and a camera and surgical tools are inserted to perform the procedure. This minimally invasive technique typically results in less pain, a shorter hospital stay, and a quicker recovery.

**Simple prostatectomy:** Simple prostatectomy, often referred to as open prostatectomy when addressing BPH, is usually recommended for men with severely enlarged prostates that are causing significant urinary symptoms. Unlike radical prostatectomy, the entire prostate gland is not removed; rather, the inner portion of the gland that is pressing against the urethra is excised. This procedure can provide relief from symptoms such as difficulty urinating, frequent urination, or the sensation of incomplete bladder emptying. In modern practice, many patients with BPH may undergo Trans-Urethral Resection of the Prostate

(TURP), which is a less invasive procedure compared to open simple prostatectomy. TURP involves removing the excess prostate tissue using a resectoscope inserted through the urethra, avoiding the need for external incisions.

The decision to perform a prostatectomy is based on a variety of factors, including the severity of the patient's condition, the size of the prostate, and the patient's overall health. In cases of prostate cancer, the Gleason score and Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) levels help guide treatment decisions, with surgery being a primary option for early-stage, localized cancer.

Urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction are the two most common complications following prostate surgery. Urinary incontinence can range from occasional leakage to complete loss of bladder control, while erectile dysfunction is the inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for sexual activity. The risk of these side effects is higher in patients undergoing radical prostatectomy compared to those undergoing simple prostatectomy. However, with advances in surgical techniques, particularly robotic-assisted procedures, the incidence of these complications has decreased over time. Nerve-sparing techniques during surgery have proven effective in preserving erectile function, especially in younger patients or those with less advanced disease.

Recovery from prostatectomy varies depending on the type of surgery performed. Patients undergoing robotic-assisted or laparoscopic prostatectomy generally experience faster recovery times and less post-operative pain compared to those undergoing open surgery. Most patients are discharged within a few days after surgery, though complete recovery can take several weeks.

In conclusion, prostatectomy is an important surgical option for managing both prostate cancer and BPH. With ongoing advancements in surgical techniques, especially the adoption of robotic-assisted approaches, the outcomes of prostatectomy have improved significantly in terms of recovery, symptom relief, and preservation of quality of life. Nonetheless, prostatectomy remains a major surgical intervention, and patients should be thoroughly informed of the potential risks and benefits before proceeding with the procedure.

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