

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [646-926-0945](tel:646-926-0945) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center

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#### FOR THE MEDIA

In this operation, our surgeons remove the entire prostate, some tissue surrounding the gland, and the seminal vesicles (small glands that help produce semen). In some cases, we also remove a number of nearby lymph nodes at the same time.

A critical aspect of surgery is our ability to tailor to the individual features of each patient's cancer. One size does not fit all: This means the exact same procedure is not appropriate for every patient.

The location, size, and other features of your cancer will be considered to design an operation that is appropriate for your individual tumor. If you choose surgery, we will do a thorough review of the biopsy material and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) so that we can better understand the likelihood that your cancer is contained within the prostate. Our surgeons work with our pathology and radiology colleagues to provide a more personalized approach to treatment.

Inspecting the lymph nodes can be an important step. It helps us determine whether your cancer has spread beyond the prostate and whether you should consider [radiation therapy](#) or [systemic therapy](#) (such as chemotherapy, hormone therapy, biologic therapy, or immunotherapy) following surgery. We are studying ways to better determine which men actually need lymph nodes removed during radical prostatectomy.

Surgery to remove the prostate may be an option for you if:

- You're newly diagnosed with early-stage, localized prostate cancer; active surveillance is not an appropriate approach for you; and you have a long life expectancy. For men in this situation, radical prostatectomy alone can often eliminate the cancer.
- You have a rising prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level after initial treatment with [focal therapy](#), indicating that the cancer wasn't completely eliminated.
- You have a more advanced tumor that could safely be removed with surgery. In this situation, we often combine surgery to remove the prostate with other treatments.

If your cancer returns after you've received radiation therapy, you may undergo a type of surgery called salvage radical prostatectomy.

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Radical prostatectomy is complex and requires a high level of technical precision.

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The prostate is surrounded by nerves and structures that are important to your ability to have normal urinary and sexual function. We take extreme care to minimize injury that can lead to side effects, such as incontinence (the inability to hold in urine) and erectile dysfunction. Learn more about how experts at MSK help minimize [side effects from prostate cancer surgery](#) and can help you manage them.

The good news is that over the past few decades, technical refinements have dramatically reduced the number of complications with this surgery. For example, we've developed techniques to incorporate the results of imaging tests into our surgical planning, enabling us to avoid injuring important structures, minimize the risk of incontinence, and maximize the chance of maintaining sexual function.

Although results for individual patients vary, studies have shown that surgeons who regularly perform radical prostatectomies have fewer complications on average than those who do these surgeries less often. Our surgeons are among the nation's most experienced in conducting prostate operations, and we're continually working to improve the safety and effectiveness of procedures through our [clinical trials](#) .

## Request an Appointment

Call [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225)

We're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

[Make an appointment](#)

## MSK's Approach to Radical Prostatectomy

Our prostate surgery team includes experts in several techniques, including robot-assisted surgery, open surgery, and laparoscopic surgery. Regardless of which surgical approach you choose, our goal is to remove your cancer completely and preserve normal urinary and sexual function.

With all surgical approaches, we've developed and use innovative techniques to preserve the tiny nerves and blood vessels attached to the prostate that help control erections. These and other advances have made some of the complications of prostate cancer surgery less common and more manageable and can spare nerves from damage. We'll work closely with you and your medical team to manage any short- or long-term side effects you may experience.

Ultimately, you'll help determine which approach your surgeon takes.

## Minimally Invasive Surgical Options

In minimally invasive surgical procedures, we make several small incisions in your abdomen. We then insert a tiny, lighted telescopic camera called a laparoscope, along with specially designed surgical instruments that a surgeon uses to perform the operation.

When you have minimally invasive surgery, you're likely to have less discomfort after the procedure and more likely to recover faster than with a traditional open surgery, in which incisions are larger and more extensive. Many men who have their prostates removed in a minimally invasive operation are able to return home the following day.

We offer two types of minimally invasive surgery.

Robot-Assisted Laparoscopic Prostatectomy

Laparoscopic Radical Prostatectomy

Salvage Radical Prostatectomy