

PAE OFFERS HOPE FOR MEN EXPERIENCING ENLARGED PROSTATE SYMPTOMS

An option for men who have failed medical therapy or are poor surgical candidates

Men who continue to experience symptoms related to an enlarged prostate gland even after conventional urological treatments are finding solutions with a procedure called prostatic artery embolization (PAE) at Jupiter Medical Center.



"PAE is a minimally invasive procedure that is performed for the management of benign prostate hyperplasia, or BPH, which is an enlarged prostate gland," says Dr. Juan Gomez, a specialist in neurointerventional and vascular interventional radiology and director of Jupiter's Stroke program.

"BPH prevalence increases with age and it is the most common prostate problem in men over the age of 50," Dr. Gomez explains. "BPH is a noncancerous growth of the prostate gland which constricts or partially blocks the urethra, leading to urinary retention symptoms."

An emerging outpatient option

PAE is an option when traditional treatments for an enlarged prostate have not worked – including lifestyle changes (e.g., limiting daily fluids, avoiding caffeine/alcohol, doing pelvic floor muscle exercises, voiding the bladder on a regular basis), medications, or surgery called transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), in which surgeons insert a scope through the urethra into the prostate to shave off excess tissue to reduce its size.

PAE has a different goal: to shrink the prostate by restricting blood flow to it. Prostate artery embolization is performed under conscious sedation on an outpatient basis, Dr. Gomez explains. Access to the blood vessels is performed at the groin or wrist level. Blood vessels are then used as "superhighways" to reach the arteries that supply blood to prostate gland. Once reached, these blood vessels are blocked using very small particles/beads; decreasing blood flow shrinks the prostate gland.

The procedure typically takes about an hour; most patients are usually discharged the same day and can resume usual activities within 24 hours.

"From a patient's perspective, PAE is an option in men who don't want surgery, in those in whom medications have been ineffective or not well tolerated due to side effects, and in those who want to preserve fertility," Dr. Gomez points out. Overall, PAE's goal is to achieve a reduction in the size of the prostate gland ranging from 20% - 40%.

"We typically see the end results of the procedure after 3-6 months, because it takes time for the prostate gland to decrease



in size," says Dr. Gomez, who embraces a multidisciplinary treatment approach in coordination with local urologists.

"This is a disease that should always be initially managed by urologists," he says. "They can offer medical therapy and urological procedures that have been the gold standard of care for many years. When patients are not ideal surgical candidates or have failed standard therapy, that's when we come into play."

Risk factors for BPH include increasing age, sedentary lifestyle, history of tobacco/smoking or alcohol use, obesity, hypertension, diabetes and a family history. Symptoms include:

- Increased frequency of urination
- Need to urinate at night
- Straining or inability to urinate
- Difficulty starting or stopping a urine stream
- Weak or intermittent urine flow

One patient's success

James Sarrantonio, 72, a retired insurance appraiser who lives in Jupiter, was referred to Dr. Gomez in late 2023 for an enlarged prostate.

"I had been through bladder cancer, but my urologist could no longer check my bladder because my prostate was so large that it was in the way," James says. "It was unbelievably uncomfortable, like I was sitting on something all the time. It kept growing bigger and bigger and bigger, and it was so uncomfortable that I hadn't ridden a bike in a couple of years. They had to do something to stop it."

Although Dr. Gomez expected James to experience full results of his November 2023 PAE procedure in about 3 months, James noticed improvement in a couple of weeks – and was soon back on his bicycle.

"It was incredible," he says. "I couldn't have asked for a better outcome. I usually don't recommend anything to anybody, but I would recommend Dr. Gomez to everybody."

Find out more by talking to your urologist or schedule an appointment with Interventional Radiology at Jupiter Medical Center at 561-263-4416.