

Hematospermia

Hematospermia means to have blood in the semen. It is a rather common condition in men. It ranges from having 'rusty color' semen to gross red blood in the semen. To have blood in the semen is quite different from having blood in the urine, so it is important to separate the two when you discuss this with your physician.

The most likely source of the blood is from either the prostate or an adjacent organ called the seminal vesicle. The prostate is a small organ the size of a walnut located just below the bladder. (See figure) It has no function except to produce part of the semen when supports the function of the sperm. As one gets old, the prostate can get big so it blocks the outflow of urine, and on occasion can become cancerous. Neither of these conditions is directly related to having blood in the semen.

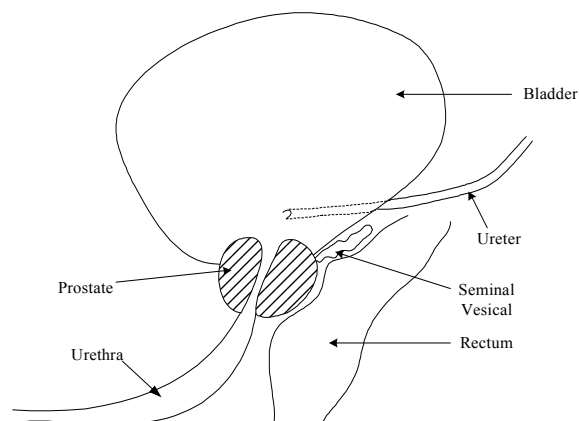
The prostate is also very rich in blood supply. This is especially true if the prostate is inflamed. Sometimes one of these blood vessels can break and bleed. In these cases, blood will appear in the semen. Because of the extensive channels where fluid in the prostate is stored, it may take a long while (sometimes up to months) before the semen is cleared. The rusty colored semen usually represents blood which has been sitting in the prostate for a while. The same thing can happen in the seminal vesicles.

From most of the studies concerning this condition, no specific disease is linked to this condition. In particular, it is not a sign of cancer or sexually transmitted diseases. There is no evidence that blood in semen increases chances of cancer, infection or sexual problems. There is no need for x-ray examination or further studies because from past experience, these studies are always negative (that is no disease shown).

The use of antibiotics in hematospermia without evidence of urinary tract infection has been controversial. There is no specific bacteria or other infective agent shown to be related to this condition. However, some physicians will treat this with a course of antibiotics presuming the inflammation in the prostate or the seminal vesicles is caused by a bacterial infection. Even in cases where no antibiotics is given, the condition is self-limiting and usually resolves within days or weeks.

Is there anything one needs to pay attention to? Yes, if the condition is associated with other urinary symptoms like burning on urination, urgency to urinate all the time or difficulty passing urine, you need to be evaluated for possible urinary tract infection. Again, having blood in the urine is a different story. Unlike blood in the semen, blood in the urine (called hematuria) can represent significant disease in the urinary tract and should be evaluated. Otherwise, have patience; the condition is self-limiting and will resolve if you give it time.

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The Male Lower Urinary Tract