

Bumrungrad performed the latest minimally invasive procedure by water vapor therapy for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia for the first time in Thailand.

At present, the number of the elderly has been rising, which raises health concerns among international public health organizations. One of the most common health problems in older males is Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), which is found in 50% of men 50 and over and 70% of men 60 and over. An 85-year-old man would have a 90% chance of having BPH. Usually, symptoms appear around of 50 years of age or older. The symptoms include difficulty urinating, frequent or urgent need to urinate especially at night, or inconsistent urine stream. These negatively impact their quality of life. The symptoms and severity of BPH vary, regardless of the size of the prostate.

Pharmacist Artirat Charukitpipat, CEO of Bumrungrad International Hospital, states, “Bumrungrad realizes the problem and has adopted the latest minimally invasive procedure by water vapor therapy for BPH for the first time in Thailand. This convenient, fast and minimally invasive procedure is appropriate for people who have trouble urinating resulting from BPH. The water vapor therapy for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since 2015. It is also approved by the Thai Food and Drug Administration in early 2021. Bumrungrad's Urology Center, one of our Centers of Excellence, strives to provide accurate diagnosis and immediate, effective treatments which meet international safety standards.

Dr. Viroj Chodchoy, Medical Director of the Urology Center and Specialist in Urology at Bumrungrad International Hospital, states, “Water vapor therapy for BPH is the latest alternative treatment which takes short time, is simple, and safe. Water vapor therapy works best for two types of patients:

1. Water vapor therapy is effective for the patients who take medications for BPH and still suffer symptoms of BPH or side effects – frequent urination at night, fainting/passing out, or headache. It also works for the patients for whom BPH medications worked well at the beginning but now yield unsatisfactory results, or patients who do not want to take medication for the rest of their life.
2. Water vapor therapy relieves stress of the patients who require surgery and are afraid of the effects on their sexual health. The semen is not released during orgasm; the patients feel only the air coming out and lose sexual pleasure. According to the statistics, 60 - 70% of the patients who have undergone prostate surgery suffer sexual problems post-surgery, which are irreversible. Water vapor therapy works best with the patients who have a healthy sex life because it almost has no effect on sexual health.

Common treatments for BPH are medication and surgery, which is the gold standard but can yield side effects like electrolyte imbalance, heavy bleeding or long anesthesia time. It is not suitable for people who have heart disease or have had a stroke. Alternative treatments have been invented to destroy prostate cells, but those treatments still have drawbacks. Water vapor therapy meets international safety standards, has fewer risks, and causes fewer complications. Water vapor therapy allows for a faster recovery fast and the prostate returns to its original physiological state and function sooner. Patients do not need additional medication and it has minimal affect on sexual health, so patients can resume their normal life faster.

Dr. Charuspong Dissaranan, Urology Specialist (Genito-Urinary) at Bumrungrad International Hospital, reveals “Water vapor therapy is appropriate for patients whose prostate weighs between 30 to 80 grams. The whole treatment process takes 10-15minutes, and the patients can go home afterward. There is no need for a hospital stay. Patients can quickly resume their normal lives. Our urologists will insert a cystoscopic instrument through the urethra. Then 103°C steam is injected into the prostate 4-6 times, depending on the size of the prostate. Each injection takes only 9 seconds, and it can cause post-treatment swelling, which can cause urinary difficulty. However, the indwelling urethral catheter can be removed within 1 week, on average - depending on the pre-treatment size of the prostate. If it is enlarged, the urologist will inject more water vapor, causing more swelling and a longer need for the catheter. The body gradually removes the dead cells, reducing the swelling over time. Usually, it takes 3months to see the full results of water vapor therapy.”

A US study on the results of water vapor therapy found that within five years, 10% of patients will need to resume taking prostate medication, and 4% will undergo another surgery or water vapor therapy. All in all, most patients save money by reducing their need for medications. They also do not need follow-ups every 3 months. Ultrasound or uroflowmetry tests are no longer necessary. Most importantly, water vapor therapy lessens worries about sexual problems that might occur after other treatments.

Bumrungrad's Urology Center is determined to improve treatment standards and our standard of care. The best treatment results are indicators of our international standards and our Bumrungrad International Hospital's brand. Our healthcare professionals frequently research international trends, innovative technology, and alternative treatments to maximize patient success and maintain our standards of safety.

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