If you received the SUNA Electronic News Bulletin last July, you were notified about this recently published primer from Life Extension Media. I have the privilege of providing additional information on this valuable resource for patients with prostate cancer and their families.

I have always believed that it is essential for any patient undergoing (or planning to undergo) any medical treatment to have a good understanding of the treatment, expected outcome, and side effects. Patients with newly diagnosed prostate cancer are struggling to make decisions about treatment options that can affect the length and quality of their lives. This primer presents details about prostate cancer, diagnostic techniques, and treatment options that can be very helpful.

Approximately one-half of the book (four chapters) gives an overview of prostate cancer, treatment options, and side effects of the treatments. The rest of the book provides additional material to enhance the information from the text. One example is Appendix B (“If You Want to Know More”) which expands on the general information discussed in the body of the text. While reading the chapter, the reader is told where to find this additional information instead of adding the information to the body of the text. Not all people are interested in learning (or reading about) all aspects of prostate cancer, so this is a good way of providing material without overwhelming the reader. It also permits the reader to skip details that he may already be familiar with while not being pulled from the core information.

Following an introductory overview of prostate cancer and scope of the disease, the first chapter tells how to use this book. That is a useful way to start since there is so much information available. Each page has an area at the bottom to write questions for the doctor. In addition, there is a page at the end of each chapter with another area for questions, comments, or concerns. Important information is highlighted in different color ink, so that information stands out. There are physician notes boxed at intervals throughout the text to further describe an important point. These notes include an example to help the person understand the clinical implication of the point. At the end of the chapter is a summary of what you should have learned from reading the text.

Chapter two is entitled “The Basics of Prostate Cancer.” As someone who works with patients who have prostate cancer, I found this short chapter delivered what it promised. It contains a wealth of information to help obtain a good overview of prostate anatomy and physiology as well as the development of cancer. It was a short but thorough basis for the following two chapters.

While reading chapter three (“Diagnosis and Testing”), I was concerned that patients with newly diagnosed prostate cancer might feel overwhelmed, as I did, at several points. The amount of information available seemed difficult at times. Not all tests are necessary for every patient (as the authors point out several times), but the information in this chapter gives an idea of the complexity of issues that are part of the current thinking regarding treatment options.

“Treatment Options” (chapter four) discusses all current available options and side effects of the treatments. Not all centers do all of the treatments available, but there is a good overview of the procedures and information in the text and appendices for how to obtain additional material on each option. Rationale for the treatment and how to deal with side effects are also addressed.

Lay persons might have some difficulty with the abbreviations used throughout the text. While this is necessary to keep the length of chapters from becoming unwieldy, it can become confusing. The abbreviations were correctly identified when first used, but it took me a while to realize that they were also located in Appendix D, “Glossary of Terms.” That made it much easier to understand what was
being discussed without detracting from the information presented.

I was very impressed with this primer for several reasons. The text is state of the art and includes possible future trends in prostate cancer. In addition, I have rarely (if ever) seen the compilation of Web sites, forms, and other resources in one location to the extent presented in this text. For some men, this may be irrelevant; for others, it will be extremely helpful. It will allow readers to search for additional reliable information to help them make the correct treatment decision.

The diagnosis of prostate cancer can be devastating for a man and his family. Men usually have options to treat and potentially cure their cancer. A Primer on Prostate Cancer is a valuable resource for the patient with prostate cancer and his family. It provides information and resources to help a man make the all-important decision about what is the best treatment for him. He can then begin that treatment knowing that his decision is the correct one for him. 

Book Review

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This is a current, comprehensive guide to prostate cancer presented in understandable terms with a user-friendly color format that will help the reader educate himself about prostate cancer. The book strives to help patients and their loved ones to combat ignorance and fear, replacing that with the empowerment of education. Back to top. Rent A Primer on Prostate Cancer 2nd edition (978-0965877770) today, or search our site for other textbooks by Stephen Strum. Every textbook comes with a 21-day "Any Reason" guarantee. Published by Life Extension. Co-authored by Stephen B. Strum, M.D., an internationally recognised expert on prostate cancer, and Donna Pogliano, partner of a warrior in the battle against prostate cancer, A Primer on Prostate Cancer - The Empowered Patient's Guide integrates the perspectives and expertise of this caring physician who is at the top of his profession with the perspectives and insights of a layperson who understands the questions newly diagnosed men and their families need answered, but may not think to ask. The goal of the authors in creating this book was to direct men and their families to a strategy... Armed with this education, they can thus become empowered patients, involved in intelligently managing their own care.