

Robotic Surgery Helps Prostate Cancer Patient Maintain Normal Life

With work, family and hobbies occupying his time, Glades County resident Don Crosswell was caught up in his life. He didn't think much about his health, until he went to his primary care physician for a routine check-up.

"He asked me if I had ever had a PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) test," Don says. "I had the test and the numbers were high." Too high. His physician referred Don to urologist, Jasper Rizzo, D.O., at Southwest Florida Urologic Associates, who took a biopsy. The result: cancer.

"I didn't expect that," Don says. "I wasn't sick and I didn't feel that anything was wrong."

Dr. Rizzo referred Don to one of his partners, urologist, Omar Benitez, M.D., who was not surprised to see the results. Prostate cancer affects one in six Caucasian men, with higher rates for black men. Don, who was 56 at the time of his diagnosis, is in the age range when many men receive the diagnosis.

"For many men, their first PSA is their first indication that they may have prostate cancer," Dr. Benitez says.

Dr. Benitez gave Don his options: Do nothing invasive and observe the cancer levels to find out if they would continue to elevate; undergo surgery to remove the prostate; have a freezing technique known as cryoablation; receive radiation therapy targeted at the prostate; or receive hormone injections that might control but not cure the cancer.

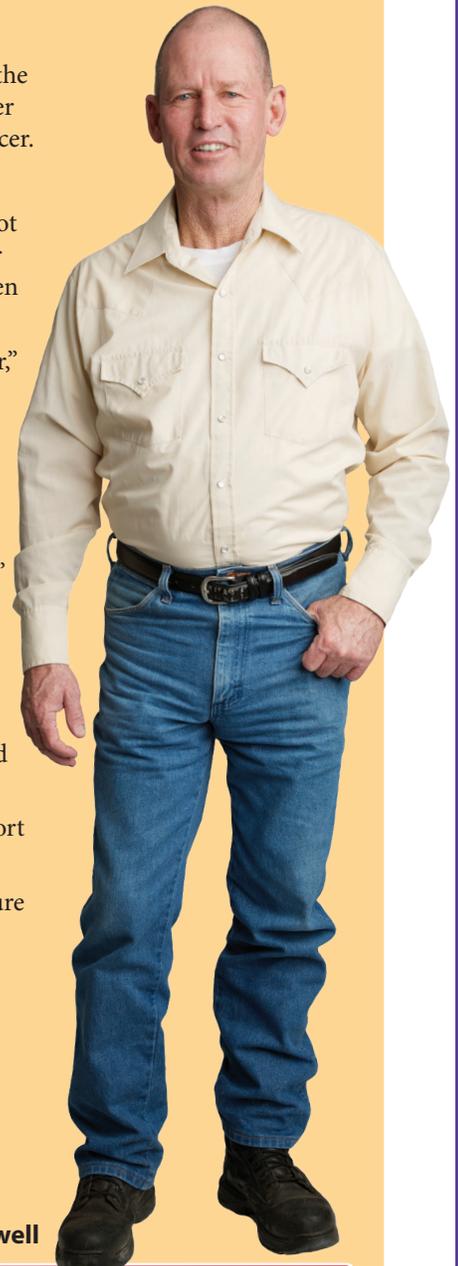
"It's important that physicians educate their patients," Dr. Benitez says. "I gave him options."

When Dr. Benitez works with a patient, his top three goals are to cure the cancer, preserve continence and help them maintain sexual function. Not every patient experiences the same outcome.

By using robotic-assisted surgery, known as da Vinci, Dr. Benitez was able to give Don the outcome that he wanted. Using a series of tiny incisions, he removed the prostate, and following a short recovery period, all of Don's functions are normal.

"He was amazing," Dr. Benitez says. "Because I was able to work quickly and he had a short hospital stay, he also had a short recovery."

Don was back at work a few weeks after his surgery and the only evidence of the procedure or the cancer is a series of tiny scars on his abdomen and belly button. "I never thought about something like cancer happening to me," he says. "Now, I know it can happen to anyone. I got the help I needed before it was too late."



Don Crosswell



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For more information on da Vinci surgery,
go to tinyurl.com/daVinciProstate