

## Prostate Cancer: Is Screening Right for You?

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- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. It is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men.
- Certain men are at higher risk of prostate cancer:
  - African American men, men of African descent, men who have a father, brother, or son with prostate cancer, and all men over 50 are at higher risk.
- There are two tests that screen a man for prostate cancer: PSA and DRE.
  - The PSA (prostate specific antigen) is a blood test for screening for prostate cancer.
  - The DRE (digital rectal exam) is where a doctor feels the prostate gland by putting a gloved finger inside the rectum.
  - The PSA is done along with a DRE to screen for prostate cancer.
  - The PSA test can find prostate cancer earlier than the DRE alone.
- The PSA test result can be high because of *other* prostate problems--so an elevated PSA does *not* always mean cancer. PSA can be higher because a man ejaculated in the 1-2 days before the test. Also, the PSA test results can sometimes be normal even if a man has prostate cancer. Certain medicines can lower the PSA test results.
- Men may benefit from having a “baseline” PSA test at age 40, especially men at higher risk of prostate cancer. The frequency of PSA testing is then based on the baseline PSA result.
- Men who will benefit most from prostate cancer screening are 50-69 years of age who have at least a 10 year life expectancy. Men 75 years of age or older should talk to their doctors before screening.
- No one is sure yet whether getting a DRE and PSA test every year will lower the number of deaths from prostate cancer. Some information now suggests that prostate screening tests may lower the number of deaths.
- If a man has a PSA and a DRE test, he will get the results of the tests. If either of the tests is abnormal, he will be referred to a doctor who will explain what the results mean and what his options are.
- If a man has a high PSA test result or a PSA result that is rising over time, a doctor may recommend a biopsy to see if the man has prostate cancer. The biopsy may cause side effects. The biopsy and treatment may or may not be paid for by the local cancer program.
- If a man has early prostate cancer, he can choose how to handle the cancer.
  - He and his doctor may choose to wait and see if the prostate cancer is changing.
  - He may choose to have surgery, radiation therapy, or hormonal therapy.
    - There are often side effects of the treatment(s).

If you don't get your results in **6 weeks** after you have the test, call the prostate cancer screening program at \_\_\_\_\_ for your results.