

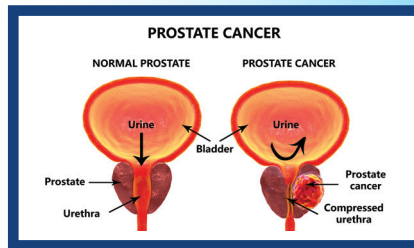
# TESTING DECISION AID FOR MEN



## *Should I Get Tested?*

### **WHAT IS THE PROSTATE AND WHERE IS THE PROSTATE?**

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland that helps men to make semen. It sits next to the bladder.



### **WHAT IS PROSTATE CANCER?**

### **IS IT HARMFUL AND AM I IN DANGER OF GETTING IT?**

Prostate cancer is very common, and most men will have prostate cancer if they live long enough. Most men will not have any symptoms, and many men will not die of the disease. However, some prostate cancers can cause very serious symptoms or even death. In fact, prostate cancer is the second highest cause of death from cancer in U.S. men.

## HOW IS PROSTATE CANCER FOUND?

Prostate cancer does not have any symptoms in its early stages. A blood test called PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) can be done as a screening test (a test that looks for cancer before you have symptoms) to help us to know who may be in danger of having prostate cancer. The PSA test is not perfect and does not always show who does, and who does not have prostate cancer. PSA levels can be low even if you have prostate cancer, and PSA levels can be high even if you do not have prostate cancer. PSA levels can also become serious if left untreated.



## WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THAT MEN CHOOSE TO DO PSA TESTING?

One reason men choose to do PSA testing is to find out if they have prostate cancer in an early stage and to treat and cure it before it spreads beyond the prostate. "The best medical studies in men over 50 show that PSA screening tests can lower your risk of dying from prostate cancer compared to no testing."

## WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THAT MEN DECIDE TO NOT DO PSA TESTING?

Some men decide not to do PSA testing because they are afraid of the results. They may be afraid that they will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and have to undergo treatment. They may also be afraid that the results will be dangerous. Most of these types of fears are unfounded. PSA testing is a simple blood test that can be done in a doctor's office. The results are usually available within a few days. PSA testing can help you make an informed decision about your health.

If you choose to be screened, there is a chance that you will be diagnosed with "low-risk" cancer. You may face pressure from your family, friends, or even doctors to treat it.

## WHAT DOES THE PSA TEST RESULT MEAN?

Doing a PSA test alone does not diagnose prostate cancer. A high or rising PSA may suggest a higher chance of having cancer in your body and could mean that you need more testing. A low PSA result suggests a lower chance of having cancer in your body.

### What if my PSA is low?

You may not require PSA testing as often, or even at all, especially if your PSA is very low.

### What if my PSA is high?

If your PSA level is high, or rising, your doctor may repeat the test several weeks later to make sure that the test results are true. If your PSA level is still high, or if it is going up, your doctor may send you to see a prostate specialist, called a urologist.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SEE THE UROLOGIST?

A urologist is a specialist of the bladder, kidney and male reproductive system, including the prostate.

The urologist may do more testing to see if there is a dangerous or aggressive prostate cancer in your body. The urologist might:

- .□ (Digital Rectal Exam)
- .□ (Biopsy of the prostate gland to check for cancer)
- .□ (Imaging tests such as ultrasound or MRI)

## WHAT IF I AM DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER?

The urologist will discuss with you whether they think the cancer is likely to be a “low-risk” (slow-growing) or a “high-risk” (aggressive) type. The best treatment depends on whether it is “low-risk” or “high-risk”:

Most prostate cancers found by PSA testing do not need to be treated (they are “low-risk”) and can be monitored by “active surveillance”. This means your doctor will watch you carefully. This method is very safe as long as the cancer stays slow-growing and non-aggressive.

For more aggressive cancers, your urologist may recommend treatment. Treatments for prostate cancer include:

- Surgery to remove the prostate
- Radiation treatment
- Hormone/medication therapy (sometimes)

## IS SCREENING RIGHT FOR ME?

### TAKE THE PSA SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ:

- Would you accept prostate cancer treatment like surgery or radiation if your doctor recommends it?
- Would you be comfortable living with untreated prostate cancer if your doctor feels that treatment is unnecessary and that it can be safely monitored with “active surveillance”?

If you answered yes to BOTH of the above, then screening may be right for you.

- Are you concerned that you would be uncomfortable knowing that you have a “low-risk” cancer and not treating it?
- If you are found to have prostate cancer, would you definitely refuse to undergo treatment if it is recommended by your doctors (surgery and/or radiation therapy)?

If you answered yes to EITHER of the above, then screening may not be right for you.

As with all medical issues, you are encouraged to speak with your doctor about a PSA prostate cancer screening test and whether it may be right for you.