

# Prostate Cancer and PSA Screening



The National Cancer Institute data for 2012:

- Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S., excluding skin cancer.
- Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among men in the U.S.
- An estimated 28,170 American men will lose their lives due to prostate cancer. This equates to one death every 18 minutes.
- 241,740 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed.

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A common problem in almost all men as they grow older is an enlarged prostate. This is called benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH. It does not raise the risk of prostate cancer. However, it can increase your PSA blood test results.

The prostate is the gland below a man's bladder that produces fluid for semen. Prostate cancer is common among older men. Prostate cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer in men over age 75. It is rare in men younger than 40.

Who should be screened for prostate cancer?

- \* Healthy men older than 40 and have a life expectancy greater than 10 years.
- \* Men who exhibit a higher risk for developing prostate cancer.

Who has a higher risk of developing prostate cancer?

- \* African-Americans.
- \* Men older than 50.
- \* Men who have a father, brother or son with prostate cancer.

How are men screened for prostate cancer?

- \* A prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test is a blood test that measures the level of PSA in the blood. PSA is a substance made mostly by the prostate that may be found in an increased amount in the blood of men who have prostate cancer.
- \* Digital rectal exam (DRE) is performed by a physician feeling the prostate through the rectum wall.

Physicians diagnose prostate cancer using PSA, DRE, and other tests including ultrasound, x-rays, or a biopsy. Because of PSA testing, most prostate cancers are now found before any symptoms appear.

A prostate biopsy may be recommended if:

- \* The PSA level is high.
- \* A rectal exam shows a hard, uneven surface.

If the biopsy shows that a man has cancer, physicians need to learn the extent (stage) of the disease to recommend the best treatment. Staging is a careful attempt to find out whether the tumor has invaded nearby tissues, whether the cancer has spread and, if so, to what parts of the body.