



CANCERcare®

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PROSTATE CANCER: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SCREENING AND DIAGNOSIS

Cancer of the prostate gland is the most common cancer affecting men. Most of the time when prostate cancer is diagnosed, the tumor is still confined to the gland. Prostate cancer screening is important in the early detection of prostate cancer. This is because many men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not have symptoms. And the earlier cancer is found, the more treatable it is.



fact sheet

WHAT SCREENING TESTS ARE AVAILABLE?

The following tests are used to check for prostate cancer:

Prostate exam. For this test, also called a digital rectal exam, the doctor inserts a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum and feels the surface of the prostate for any lumps, swelling or other abnormalities. This is the most common test to screen for prostate cancer.

PSA blood test. PSA refers to “prostate-specific antigen,” a protein produced by the prostate gland. Older men generally have higher levels of PSA than younger men, as prostate gland size and PSA levels increase with age. Your doctor can tell you if your test results are normal for your age. High levels of PSA may indicate the presence of prostate cancer.

WHAT ARE THE SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROSTATE CANCER?

All men should talk with their doctor about the pros and cons of being screened for prostate cancer. The following guidelines may help you in talking with your doctor about prostate cancer screening:

Men at average risk of prostate cancer: Start talking with your doctor about prostate screening at age 50.

Men who are at higher risk of prostate cancer: Starting at age 45, talk with your doctor about what screening schedule is right for you.

Men at highest risk (for example, those who have had several relatives diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age): Ask your doctor about screening starting at age 40.

(over)

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR PROSTATE CANCER?

All men are at risk of developing prostate cancer based on their having a prostate gland. The following are some of the other known risk factors. Talk to your doctor about your risk.

Age. Prostate cancer is more common in men over 50. Most cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed in men age 65 or older.

Race. African-American men are at a higher risk of developing prostate cancer. The reasons for this are unclear.

Family history. Having a father, grandfather, uncle or brother with prostate cancer increases your risk. Having several close relatives diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age puts you at a higher risk.

Diet. A diet high in animal fat and red meat may increase the risk for prostate cancer.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE CANCER?

Early-stage prostate cancer usually has no symptoms. If you are experiencing any of the following, check with your doctor, as they may be signs of benign (non-cancerous) prostate disease or prostate cancer:

- Frequent urination
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Blood in the urine
- The urge to urinate frequently at night
- Pain or burning during urination



CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by professional oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

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