



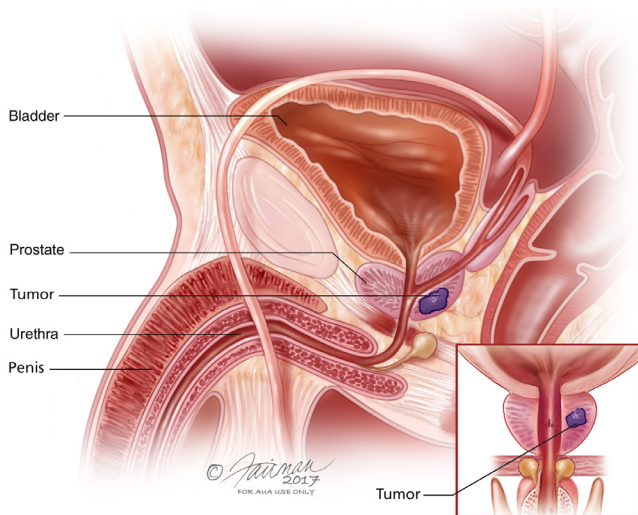
# Is Prostate Cancer Screening Right For Me?

*Urology Care*  
**FOUNDATION™**  
 The Official Foundation of the  
 American Urological Association

## WHAT IS PROSTATE CANCER?

Only men have a prostate gland. This walnut-shaped gland sits below the bladder. The prostate surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine out of your body.

## MALE PELVIS ANATOMY



Prostate cancer is when abnormal cells in your prostate grow out of control. Prostate cancer cells can form a tumor in your gland and spread by breaking away from the tumor. They can travel through blood vessels or lymph vessels to reach other parts of the body. After spreading, cancer cells may attach to other organs and tissues and grow to form new tumors, causing damage where they land.

## OTHER CONDITIONS OF THE PROSTATE

- **Prostatitis and Chronic Pelvic Pain** – are conditions that cause inflammation in the prostate and pain around the penis and groin with urination.
- **Enlarged Prostate or Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)** – is a condition where the prostate becomes large and starts to cause urinary and other problems.

## SHOULD I BE SCREENED?

“Screening” means testing for a disease even if you have no symptoms. The choice to be screened for prostate cancer is a personal one, and it should be taken seriously. It begins with a conversation with your doctor about your risk for the disease, including your personal and family history. Then, a talk about the benefits and risks of testing.

Generally, screening is recommended for men with no symptoms who are between the ages of 55 to 69.

Some men who are at higher risk for prostate cancer should consider screening as early as age 40-45. This group includes smokers, African American men and men with a father, brother or son who has had prostate cancer.

## WHAT ARE THE SCREENING TESTS FOR PROSTATE CANCER?

- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE):** a physical test to feel the prostate for problems.
- **Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA):** a blood test to measure this protein found in the prostate.
  - A low PSA score is a sign of a healthy prostate.
  - A rapid rise in scores may signal a problem (not necessarily cancer).

# Is Prostate Cancer Screening Right For Me?

- **Biopsy:** If the DRE and PSA tests cause concern, a tissue sample is removed from the prostate. It will be reviewed under a microscope to detect any cancer cells for a diagnosis.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE CANCER?

**Early stages** may cause no symptoms.

**Intermediate stages** cause urinary problems like:

- trouble urinating or a weak urine flow
- frequent urination
- pain or burning

Non-cancerous problems (like Prostatitis and BPH) may also cause these symptoms.

**High-risk stages** cause urinary problems and may include:

- Dull pain in the pelvic area
- Blood in the urine
- Painful ejaculation
- Pain in hips, lower back or upper thighs
- Loss of appetite and/or weight loss

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF TESTING?

As you talk with your doctor to determine if Prostate Cancer screening is right for you, it is helpful to know the benefits and risks of the testing. It is best to use both the PSA and DRE tests for initial screening.

**Possible benefits of prostate cancer testing:**

- A normal PSA test may put your mind at ease.
- A PSA and DRE may find prostate cancer early before it has spread.
- Early cancer treatment can slow the spread of the disease.
- Early cancer treatment helps many men live longer.

**Possible risks of prostate cancer testing:**

- Sometimes PSA test results suggest something is wrong when it is not (a “false positive”) and lead to worry and an unneeded biopsy.
- A normal PSA result may miss cancer (a “false negative”).

- A positive PSA test may detect prostate cancer, but it is slow-growing and won't cause problems

## POSSIBLE RISKS OF A BIOPSY AND TREATMENT

Biopsies (a surgical procedure to confirm a cancer diagnosis) can cause bleeding or lead to infection. Treating prostate cancer with surgery, radiation, drugs or hormones, can cause problems. Most common side effects are erection problems, urine leaks and/or bowel issues. Men must balance the risks of treatment versus the risks of cancer. A slow-growing cancer, for example, may need no treatment at all, especially for older men.

## ABOUT THE UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, [UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions](http://UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions) or go to [UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist](http://UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist) to find a doctor near you.

## DISCLAIMER

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologists or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For copies of printed materials about Prostate Cancer and other urologic conditions, visit [UrologyHealth.org/Order](http://UrologyHealth.org/Order) or call 800-828-7866.