



Urology Northwest, PS • 6005 244th Street SW, Suite 111 • Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043 • 425.275.5555

What patients should know about Prostate screening... a message from your physicians at Urology Northwest and the American Urological Association.

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in men in the United States, and the second leading cause of cancer death in men. One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. African-American men face a one in three chance of being diagnosed. Over 30,000 men die each year from prostate cancer; however, early detection may save lives.

The physicians at Urology Northwest and their professional organization the American Urological Association are concerned that recent reports about prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing may present conflicting information to patients about the value of this critical prostate-cancer screening test. The benefits of regular screening and early detection should not be discounted in the overall population.

Speak to your healthcare provider:

We believe that the decision to screen is one that a man should make with his doctor following a careful discussion about the benefits and risks of screening. In men who wish to be screened, we recommend getting a baseline PSA along with a physical exam of the prostate called a digital rectal exam (DRE) at age 40.

PSA is a substance produced by the prostate gland. The PSA level in a man's blood is an important marker of many prostate diseases, including prostate cancer.

Men who wish to be screened for prostate cancer should have both a PSA test and a DRE. There is evidence from research studies suggesting that combining these tests improves the overall rate of prostate cancer detection.

A variety of factors can affect PSA levels and should be considered in the interpretation of the test results. The three most common prostate diseases – prostatitis, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and prostate cancer- may cause an elevated PSA. Other things like medication, trauma or some treatments may also affect the PSA results.

Men undergoing PSA testing should know these important factors:

- Change in PSA levels over time (PSA velocity) is used to assess both cancer risk and aggressiveness
- Blood PSA levels tend to increase with age
- Larger prostates produce larger amounts of PSA

A prostate biopsy confirms the presence of prostate cancer. The decision to proceed with a biopsy should be based primarily on the PSA and DRE results along with other factors such as the man's race, family history, prior biopsy history and other significant health issues the man may have.

Options for dealing with prostate cancer are based on stage and grade of the cancer. This is determined by the biopsy. There are usually several options open to patients. Treatment plans are individualized based on the patient's goals and health status.

To learn more about prostate cancer, visit KNOWYOURSTATS.org and click on the Resource link or make an appointment with your physician.