

Preventive Exams: Take Care of Your Prostate



The prostate is a gland of the male reproductive system located just below the bladder. Its main function is to produce part of the fluid that makes up semen. Preventive screenings help detect early or suspicious signs of prostate cancer before symptoms appear or before the disease spreads to other organs. When cancer is identified early, the chances of cure increase and long-term quality of life improves.

Which tests detect prostate cancer?

Prostate-Specific Antigen Test (PSA)
Prostate-specific antigen is a protein produced by the prostate. This protein is found in semen and also in the blood. To determine the PSA level, a blood test is performed. A high PSA level in the blood may suggest a higher likelihood of having prostate cancer. However, because this test is not specific for detecting cancer, PSA levels can rise for other reasons, such as: • Having an enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH) • Having other common prostate problems • Taking certain medications If the PSA level is high, additional tests are needed to accurately determine whether prostate cancer is present.
PSA Special Tests
Percentage of Free PSA (PSA): measures the percentage of PSA in the blood that is not bound to other proteins. A low percentage of free PSA means there is a higher likelihood of having prostate cancer. In these cases, a biopsy may be recommended to obtain a more accurate diagnosis. Complexed PSA: this test directly measures the amount of PSA that is bound to other proteins in the blood, meaning the portion of PSA that is not free. Tests that combine different types of PSA: some newer tests combine the results of various PSA types to obtain an overall risk score. These tests include the Prostate Health Index (PHI) and the 4Kscore test. PSA Density: through a transrectal ultrasound, the doctor can measure the size of the prostate and compare that information with PSA levels. A high PSA density indicates a greater likelihood of cancer. This test is also used to help correct PSA variations related to prostate enlargement.
Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)
In this test, the doctor performs a rectal exam by inserting a finger (with gloves and lubrication) into the rectum to feel the back portion of the prostate. In this way, the doctor can detect any concerning changes in the texture, shape, or size of the gland, which could be an indicator of cancer.
Prostate Biopsy
A biopsy is the only way to diagnose prostate cancer. This procedure involves the doctor removing small samples of prostate tissue so they can be examined under a microscope to determine whether cancerous cells are present.

Prostate Cancer Risk Factors

Age
The likelihood of developing prostate cancer increases after age 50.
Exposure to Chemical Substances
The risk may be higher in people who have been exposed to certain chemical substances, such as arsenic.
Family History
The risk of developing prostate cancer increases if a close family member has been diagnosed with this type of cancer.
Genes
Mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes are associated with a higher risk of developing prostate cancer and other types of cancer.
Obesity
People with obesity may have a higher risk of prostate cancer compared to those who maintain a healthy weight.

What is the main benefit of prostate cancer screening tests?

- The main benefit of undergoing screening tests is identifying the disease at an early stage.



Recommendation from Medical Specialists

It is recommended that men aged 50 or older talk with their doctor about the pros and cons of early detection of prostate cancer. This conversation should include a review of their risk factors and their preferences regarding the screening tests most appropriate for their situation.

Social and Emotional Aspects

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the following telephone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health 787-641-9133

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/prostate-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20353087>
<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/prostata/hoja-informativa-psa>
<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000381.htm>
<https://www.cdc.gov/prostate-cancer/es/screening/index.html>
<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003346.htm>

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