

# Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) Test

## Is PSA testing right for me?

Current guidelines recommend all men 55-69 years old should consider the benefits and risks of Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) screening. The decision about whether to be screened for prostate cancer should be an individual one. Use this decision aid to help you and your healthcare provider talk about whether or not you should have a PSA test. You may be at a **higher risk** for prostate cancer, and should start thinking about getting screened at a younger age if you are **African American** or have a **family history** of prostate cancer.

Frequently Asked Questions	If you have a PSA test	If you do not have a PSA test
What is the PSA test?	It is a blood test that measures how much protein the prostate gland is making.	Does not apply.
If my PSA level is high, what are the chances that I have prostate cancer?	About 3 or 4 in every 10 men (30-40%) with a high PSA level have prostate cancer. Other things can cause high PSA levels, like inflammation, infection, or an enlarged prostate.	You will not know your PSA level.
If my PSA level is normal, can I be sure that I don't have prostate cancer?	No. About 1-2 in every 10 men (15%) with a normal PSA level have prostate cancer.	You will not know your PSA level.
Will getting the PSA test lower my chance of dying from prostate cancer?	With regular screening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSA screening prevents 1 to 2 deaths from prostate cancer for every 1,000 men screened.</li> <li>• PSA screening prevents 1 death from prostate cancer for every 27 men who are found to have prostate cancer.</li> </ul>	Does not apply.
What are the benefits?	Getting screened allows you to treat aggressive prostate cancers before they cause symptoms. This may prevent the spread of prostate cancer and prostate cancer death.	You will avoid the worry of a possible false positive test and the risks that go along with biopsies and treatments.
What are the risks?	It is not possible to tell if a cancer is aggressive from a PSA test alone. If you have a high PSA level, you may be recommended to have more testing, such as biopsies.	You will not find prostate cancer early through a PSA test.
What side effects can I expect from a prostate biopsy?	Most men experience discomfort, blood in urine and/or bleeding at the biopsy site during the first few days after a prostate biopsy.	You will not have side effects if you do not have a PSA test, because you will not be offered a prostate biopsy.
What risks are associated with a prostate biopsy?	Among men who undergo prostate biopsy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 7 in every 100 men (7%) have moderate to severe pain</li> <li>• About 3 in every 100 men (3%) get an infection</li> <li>• About 1 in every 100 men (1%) will have a complication that leads to hospitalization</li> </ul>	You will not have these complications if you do not have a PSA test, because you will not be offered a prostate biopsy.

## For more information, go to:

- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Prostate Cancer Screening, 2017 Draft Recommendations
  - » [screeningforprostatecancer.org](http://screeningforprostatecancer.org)
- National Cancer Institute Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test
  - » [www.cancer.gov/types/prostate/psa-fact-sheet](http://www.cancer.gov/types/prostate/psa-fact-sheet)
- American Cancer Society Recommendations for Prostate Cancer Early Detection
  - » [www.cancer.org/cancer/prostate-cancer/early-detection/acs-recommendations.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/prostate-cancer/early-detection/acs-recommendations.html)
- Maine Prostate Cancer Info Center
  - » [www.maine prostatecancer.com](http://www.maine prostatecancer.com)

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