

Who is at risk?

The **risk** of getting prostate cancer is higher in a man who is African-American.

The **risk** of getting prostate cancer is also higher in a man who...

- is age 45 or older.
- has had a father or brother with prostate cancer.

What is prostate cancer screening?

There are two tests available for prostate cancer screening. They can be done together.

- Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test
- Digital Rectal Exam

RESOURCE INFORMATION

For more information about prostate cancer screening, call any of these toll-free numbers:

Texas Department of Health
1-800-242-3399

American Cancer Society
1-800-227-2345

Cancer Information Service
1-800-422-6237

WEBSITE INFORMATION

Texas Department of Health
<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/PROSTATE.HTM>

American Cancer Society
<http://www.cancer.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov>



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Prostate Cancer Screening

*facts for
the African
American Man*

This brochure is designed to help you talk to your doctor about whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.

What are the facts?

The **prostate** is a male genital gland about the size of a walnut. The prostate helps produce semen and surrounds the portion of the tube through which urine passes (urethra).

- Prostate cancer is the **most common** type of cancer and

leads to more deaths in men than any other type of cancer except lung cancer.

- The risk of prostate cancer is **higher** in African-American men than in other racial/ethnic groups.
- African-American men are **twice as likely** to die of prostate cancer than men of other racial/ethnic groups.



What are the tests?

The **PSA test** is a blood test for prostate cancer that measures the level of a substance in the blood called prostate specific antigen. An elevated PSA test result may lead to a biopsy of the prostate to see whether prostate cancer is present.

Advantages of the PSA Test

- Can detect prostate cancer sooner than the digital rectal exam alone.
- Less embarrassing than the digital rectal exam.
- Can detect some prostate cancers that the digital rectal exam cannot.

Disadvantages of the PSA Test

- A man could end up worrying about what an elevated PSA test result means.
- It is unclear whether regular PSA testing will reduce the number of deaths from prostate cancer.
- A PSA test result can be **abnormal**, even though a man does **not** have prostate cancer. This is called a “false positive” result.
- A PSA test result can be **normal**, even though a man **has** prostate cancer. This is called a “false negative” result. False negative biopsies of the prostate can also occur.
- An elevated PSA test result or an abnormal digital rectal exam may lead to other tests, such as a biopsy of the prostate, to see whether prostate cancer is present.

During a **digital rectal exam**, a doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to examine the prostate. Many men dread this exam because it may cause some embarrassment or discomfort, but it is an exam that takes less than a minute.

Advantages of the

Digital Rectal Exam

- Easy to do, and takes a short time.
- Can be done in a doctor’s office and a doctor can tell you immediately whether an abnormality is felt.
- Can screen for two types of cancer at once (prostate and rectal).

Disadvantages of the

Digital Rectal Exam

- May be embarrassing or uncomfortable.
- Does not show conclusively that a man has cancer and may lead to further testing.

Options for men with early prostate cancer:

A man with early prostate cancer can choose among the following options:

Watchful Waiting

Prostate cancer may grow slowly, without symptoms. Therefore, many older men with prostate cancer may not need any treatment. For example, a man age 70 or older is less likely to die from prostate cancer— even though he is at higher risk of having it.

Prostatectomy

The surgical removal of part, or all, of the prostate.

Radiation Therapy

High energy x-rays or x-ray pellets that are implanted in the prostate may be used to kill cancer cells.

At this time, doctors do not know which option is best for early prostate cancer. There may be possible side effects of prostate cancer treatment that can affect your quality of life. Side effects of treatment may include: the inability to get or keep an erection; the inability to hold urine; narrowing of the tube through which urine passes (urethra) due to scars called strictures; having trouble urinating; and rectal scarring.

If you are diagnosed with prostate cancer, ask your doctor about clinical treatment trials.



Some organizations recommend screening African-American men with both tests every year starting at age 45. Some organizations do not recommend the PSA test at all. Therefore, the PSA screening test is controversial.

Every man has the right to request a PSA test from his doctor. Every African-American man age 45 or older should consult with his doctor and then decide whether a PSA test is right for him.