

# PROSTATE CANCER

## Step 1: Putting Together Your Health Care System

Selecting a doctor with experience in screening for prostate cancer

Get screened at least every two years starting at 40 if you have a family history, everyone over 50

## Step 2. What tests to I need for screening

### **Digital rectal exam (DRE). That test may not now be necessary**

During a DRE, your doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into your rectum to examine your prostate, which is adjacent to the rectum. If your doctor finds any abnormalities in the texture, shape or size of the gland, you may need further tests.

**Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test.** A blood test for PSA, a substance that's naturally produced by your prostate gland. It's normal for a small amount of PSA to be in your bloodstream. However, if a higher than usual level is found, it may indicate prostate infection, inflammation, enlargement. If it is high I would repeat the test making sure you don't have prostatitis or some other issue that could raise the PSA.

## Step 3. What do I do if the test is positive?

- Select a Prostate Cancer Specialist: Urologist or Radiation Oncologist
- Select that person carefully, look at credentials, experience and reviews. Selecting a doctor with experience treating prostate cancer. Making sure the doctor is available if you need them or have coverage. Checking your insurance to make sure what procedures are covered

## Step 3. Get some definitive testing

Now is not the time to stop and wait. There will be plenty of time for you to make decisions about treatment

Other test should be done. Always ask is this test necessary and why. Do you need both and ultrasound and MRI

- **Ultrasound.** During a transrectal ultrasound, a small probe, about the size and shape of a cigar, is inserted into your rectum. The probe uses sound waves to create a picture of your prostate gland.
- **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).** In some situations, your doctor may recommend an MRI scan of the prostate to create a more detailed picture. MRI images may help your

doctor plan a procedure to remove prostate tissue samples.

- **Biopsy:** Prostate biopsy is often done using a thin needle that's inserted into the prostate to collect tissue. The tissue sample is analyzed in a lab to determine whether cancer cells are present

Your doctor uses the information from these tests to assign your cancer a stage. Prostate cancer stages are indicated by Roman numerals ranging from I to IV. The lowest stages indicate the cancer is confined to the prostate. By stage IV, the cancer may have grown beyond the prostate and may have spread to other areas of the body.

#### Step 4 What are you going to do?

Understand what your doctor is telling you about your disease after the workup. If you don't understand take someone with you.

Expect to hear all your options. Do some reading

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion

Make your own decision based upon what you have read