

IS A PSA TEST RIGHT FOR YOU?



- There is some debate about whether the PSA test for routine annual prostate cancer screening is a good idea. This is partly because, in many cases, prostate cancer is uniquely slow-moving.
- The PSA test is the leading method of screening for prostate cancer. PSA screening can help catch the disease at an early stage when treatment may be more effective and potentially have fewer side effects.
- PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, is a protein produced by the prostate and found mostly in semen, with very small amounts released into the bloodstream. When there's a problem with the prostate—such as the development and growth of prostate cancer—more PSA is released. Sometimes, a man's prostate releases slightly high PSA for other reasons.
- During a PSA test, a small amount of blood is drawn from the arm, and the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate, is measured. A higher PSA means that there is a greater chance that you have prostate cancer.
- Your doctor will consider several factors when evaluating the results of your PSA test, including age (PSA rises with age) and race (Black men tend to have slightly higher PSAs, on average). If you have had multiple PSA tests, your doctor will look at the trend, and any rate of rise over time (PSA velocity).
- PSA screening is just the first step, alerting you and your doctor that more testing may be needed. If PSA is only slightly elevated, your doctor may recommend repeating the test a couple of weeks later. From there, other types of tests can help with the decision on whether you need a biopsy.
- Check your healthcare coverage and have a conversation with your healthcare provider about your personal risks and whether a PSA test may be right for you.