

IMPACT

Patient Information

PROSTATE CANCER

What Is the Prostate?

The prostate is a gland, about the size of a walnut, located under the bladder surrounding the upper part of the urethra. The urethra is a tube that carries urine and semen through the penis to the outside of the body. The prostate gland is found only in men. It produces semen, the liquid that carries the sperm when a man ejaculates.

What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer starts in the cells of the prostate gland. Sometimes cancer is called a malignancy. When a man has prostate cancer, the prostate cancer cells grow into a tumor. Cancer cells can also spread to other parts of the body. When this happens, those parts of the body do not work, as they should. However, prostate cancer can be found and treated before it spreads.

How Prostate Cancer is Found?

As with most cancers, prostate cancer is easier to treat if it is found early, before it has spread outside of the prostate gland. Cancers found by DRE and/or PSA testing are usually smaller than cancers found after you begin to have problems with your urine or feel ill.

The PSA test is a blood test that measures the amount of prostate specific antigen made by the prostate gland. Blood is taken from the arm and is tested in a laboratory for prostate specific antigen, a substance made by the prostate gland. High levels of PSA may mean that a man might have prostate cancer.

Other problems with the prostate gland may make your PSA high. If your PSA is high, other tests will be done if a high PSA is being caused by prostate cancer.

A digital rectal exam (DRE) is the way that your doctor can feel your prostate gland. Your doctor will put on gloves and put a finger into your rectum. You will be asked to bend over. By doing this, your doctor can tell if your prostate feels normal or not. It may be

uncomfortable and embarrassing for you to have this done, but it is important for your doctor to know how your prostate gland feels.

Both the PSA and DRE must be done in order for your doctor to know if your prostate is fine or if you need to have more tests.

Your doctor and/or your nurse will explain what your test results mean. Do not be afraid to ask about anything that you do not understand.