

# Prostate specific antigen (PSA) test: yes or no?

Use this decision aid to help you and your healthcare professional talk about whether or not you will have a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. Men usually consider this test when they are aged 50 or older.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Having a PSA test	Not having a PSA test
<b>What does the test involve?</b>	It is a blood test that measures the antigen level in the blood from the prostate gland.	Does not apply
<b>What are my chances of having prostate cancer in my lifetime?</b>	About 15 in every 100 men in the U.S. (15%) will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime.	About 15 in every 100 men in the U.S. (15%) will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime.
<b>If my PSA level is high, what are the chances that I have prostate cancer?</b>	30 in every 100 men with a high PSA level (30%) have prostate cancer. Inflammation and infection also cause high PSA levels.	If you choose not to have the PSA test, you will not know your PSA level.
<b>If my PSA level is normal, can I be sure that I don't have prostate cancer?</b>	No, you cannot be sure. About 15 in every 100 men with a normal PSA level (15%) have prostate cancer.	If you choose not to have the PSA test, you will not know your PSA level.
<b>Will getting the PSA test lower my chance of dying from prostate cancer?</b>	Studies have shown different results. If there is a benefit to getting a PSA test, it may be that the test prevents 1 in every 1,000 men (0.1%) from dying of prostate cancer. 5 in every 1,000 men who get the PSA test (0.5%) die from prostate cancer.	6 in every 1,000 men who do not have the PSA test (0.6%) die from prostate cancer.
<b>What are the advantages?</b>	33 in every 100 prostate cancers (33%) are aggressive. A small number of aggressive prostate cancers will benefit from early treatment.	You will avoid the risks that go along with biopsies and treatments.
<b>What are the risks?</b>	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 given more tests, such as biopsies. Biopsies and treatments carry risks.	You lose the small chance of finding an aggressive prostate cancer through a PSA test.
<b>What risks are associated with a prostate biopsy?</b>	About 17 in every 100 men who have a prostate biopsy (17%) will experience a serious problem such as infection.	You will avoid these risks if you do not have a PSA test because you will not be offered a prostate biopsy.
<b>What other side effects can I expect from a prostate biopsy?</b>	Most men experience pain, blood in urine and/or bleeding during the first few days after a prostate biopsy.	You will avoid these side effects if you do not have a PSA test because you will not be offered a prostate biopsy.
<b>What are the risks associated with prostate cancer treatment?</b>	About 30 in every 100 men treated for prostate cancer (30%) have erection problems. Roughly 20 in every 100 men (20%) will leak urine.	You will avoid these risks if you do not have the PSA test because you will not be offered treatment.

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