

# **The Definitive Screening Guide for Prostate Cancer**

## **1. Understanding the Prostate**

The prostate is a small, walnut-shaped gland found only in people assigned male at birth. It sits below the bladder and surrounds the urethra. Its primary function is to produce seminal fluid, which is part of semen. As men age, the prostate naturally grows larger. While this is normal, it can sometimes cause urinary symptoms or allow certain health issues such as prostatitis or prostate cancer to develop.

## **2. What Is Prostate Cancer?**

Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the prostate grow uncontrollably. It is one of the most common cancers in adult men globally. While many prostate cancers grow slowly, some are aggressive. Early detection significantly improves treatment outcomes. Importantly, most early-stage prostate cancers show no noticeable symptoms, which makes screening an essential part of adult male healthcare.

## **3. Why Screening Matters**

Screening helps detect prostate cancer early—before symptoms appear. Early detection can:

- Improve treatment success.
- Increase survival rates.
- Reduce the need for aggressive treatment.
- Allow doctors to monitor low-risk cancers safely.

Screening does not diagnose cancer. Instead, it identifies signs that more tests may be needed.

## **4. Who Should Be Screened?**

Screening is for adults, not teens. Medical organizations around the world recommend screening based on risk level:

- Adults at average risk: Begin discussions with a doctor at age 50.
- High-risk adults: Begin discussions at age 40–45. High risk includes:
  - A father, brother, or son diagnosed with prostate cancer.
  - Black/African men, who statistically face higher risk.
  - Men with a strong family history of cancers such as breast or ovarian cancer.

The decision to screen should be made by adults and their healthcare providers.

## **5. Types of Screening Tests**

There are two main screening tools used together or separately:

- PSA Blood Test (Prostate-Specific Antigen) The PSA test measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate. High PSA levels may indicate:
  - Prostate cancer
  - Prostatitis (inflammation)
  - Benign prostate enlargement
  - Recent

ejaculation • Urinary infections It is simple, safe, and widely used. B. Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) A doctor gently checks the prostate through the rectum to feel for abnormalities such as: • Hard areas • Lumps • Irregular shape • Enlargement A DRE is quick, and while sometimes uncomfortable, it provides valuable information.

## 6. What Happens After Screening?

After screening, the doctor reviews results: • Normal or low-risk results: – The adult continues routine yearly or bi-yearly monitoring. • Elevated or abnormal results: – The doctor may repeat the PSA test. – Imaging tests such as an ultrasound or MRI may be ordered. – A referral to a urologist may be made for further evaluation. A high PSA does NOT automatically mean cancer. Many noncancerous conditions raise PSA levels.

## 7. Possible Symptoms in Adults

Although early prostate cancer often shows no symptoms, adults should speak to a doctor if they notice: • Trouble starting or stopping urination • Weak or slow urine flow • Frequent urination, especially at night • Pain or burning during urination • Difficulty emptying the bladder • Blood in urine or semen • Pelvic, back, or hip discomfort These symptoms can also come from non-cancerous conditions such as infection or prostate enlargement.

## 8. Reducing Risk: Healthy Lifestyle Habits

Healthy lifestyle choices support long-term prostate and overall health: Diet: • Eat plenty of vegetables (especially tomatoes, leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables). • Incorporate whole grains and reduce processed foods. • Limit red and processed meats. • Choose healthy fats such as nuts, seeds, and olive oil. Exercise: • Aim for regular physical activity such as brisk walking, cycling, or strength training. General wellness: • Maintain a healthy weight. • Avoid smoking. • Stay hydrated. • Manage stress with relaxation techniques, rest, and positive habits.

## 9. Key Takeaways

• Prostate cancer is common but highly treatable when found early. • Screening uses PSA tests and DRE exams. • Screening is recommended only for adults. • Healthy daily habits support prostate health and overall well-being.

## 10. Final Notes

This guide provides general awareness. Adults should consult healthcare professionals for personalized medical advice, especially when making decisions about when to begin screening or interpreting PSA results. Knowledge empowers individuals to make informed decisions about long-term health.