



## PSA Testing for Prostate Cancer

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) is a chemical substance present in the blood and derived solely from the prostate gland. This gland is the only source of PSA and the level in the blood may rise with any prostate disease. Therefore abnormal levels of PSA do not indicate a specific disease.

PSA has been used to detect early prostate cancer. Prostate cancer can only be diagnosed by a microscopic examination of a biopsy. This is usually obtained by a needle biopsy using trans-rectal ultrasound as an imaging guide (TRUS). PSA levels only identify a group of people in whom a higher risk of prostate cancer exists.

The Federal Health Department has stated that their current policy is to not recommend PSA testing to facilitate early detection of prostate cancer.

At present, the Urological Society takes the position that:

Individual men aged 50 to 70 years with at least a 10 year life expectancy should be able to be screened by annual DRE and PSA testing, after appropriate counselling regarding the potential risks and benefits of investigations and the controversies of treatment. It should be left to the individual doctor to decide whether to advocate testing in a man not requesting it.

Population screening of asymptomatic men is not recommended.

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These recommendations are consistent with the AHTAC Report and the ACS Guidelines.