

## Prostate Cancer Information Sheet

**What is Prostate Cancer?** The prostate is a walnut-size gland found only in men. It is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in Asian/Pacific Islander males. There are screening tests that can help find prostate cancer when it is at an early stage; but it is unclear whether or not early diagnosis will increase survival rates from the disease. The decision about getting screened should be left up to the individual and his health care provider.

### **Who is at risk?**

- All men over the age of 50
- Men who eat a high fat diet
- Men with a family history of prostate cancer

### **Screening Guidelines**

- At age 50, talk to your doctor about beginning annual prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests and digital rectal exams of the prostate gland.
- Factors to consider include your overall health and life expectancy.
- Men who are at high risk (family history of prostate cancer) should talk to their doctors about getting screenings at an early age.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Early prostate cancer often does not cause symptoms. As men age, many experience an enlargement of the prostate gland that is NOT cancerous. However, a man who has any of the following should see a doctor to see if prostate cancer is causing the symptoms:
  - Frequency of urination, especially at night
  - Painful or burning urination or ejaculation
  - Difficulty in starting or holding back urine
  - Blood in urine or semen
  - Weak or interrupted flow of urine
  - Pain or stiffness in lower back, hips, or upper thighs

### **Descriptions of Common Screening Tests for Prostate Cancer**

#### PSA Blood Test (Prostate-specific antigen)

- *Blood is drawn and measured for a substance called PSA.*
- *Normal levels are at or below 4.0 ng/ml.*
- *If your PSA level is slightly higher, it does not mean that you have prostate cancer. Other conditions may cause the PSA level to rise above 4.0. Your doctor might recommend that you have another test at a later time just to see if the level remains high. He/she may also recommend additional tests to find out if cancer is present.*

### Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)

- *During this examination, a doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the patient's rectum to feel the prostate gland for any abnormally firm areas that might be cancer. The prostate gland is next to the rectum and most cancers begin in the part of the gland that can be examined by this type of an exam*
- *The DRE test is more effective when used together with the PSA test.*

### Other Screening Tests:

- *Transrectal ultrasonography: A thin tube is inserted into the rectum. This tube has an ultrasound transmitter at the end of it and allows the doctor to view the prostate gland from within the rectum. This helps the doctor see abnormalities which may be present in this organ.*

### **References**

- Cancer Information Service (800) 4-CANCER, a program of the National Cancer Institute  
<http://cancernet.nci.nih.gov>
- American Cancer Society (800)ACS-2345  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)