

Understanding your Prostate

----- PSA and Prostate Cancer-----

What is PSA?

• **PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) is an enzyme produced by the prostate** which is important for fertility. It is normal to have small amount of PSA in the bloodstream. Higher levels of PSA in the blood may be an indication of the presence of prostate cancer. Although PSA is a good test for detecting cancer, it is not perfect and just because you have an elevated PSA does not mean you have cancer.

Should I get checked?

- **We recommend annual PSA testing from the age of 45, or 40 if there is a history of prostate cancer in the family.**
- A family history of prostate cancer is a significant risk factor which is more important the greater the number of affected family members.
- In older, or less healthy men (say with a life expectancy of 10 -12 years), it is not so important to pick up early prostate cancer because non-curative treatments are probably just as good as curative ones over this timespan. This does not mean that PSA should not be done however, it just means that the triggers for biopsy and intervention are at higher PSA levels.

What if my PSA is elevated?

- **If your PSA is persistently elevated**, or your prostate is abnormal on examination, we may recommend a Prostate Biopsy.

What if I have Prostate Cancer?

- **What if my biopsy shows cancer?** If cancer is found on your biopsy, we will sit you down and talk about treatment options. This may include surgery, radiation or sometimes other strategies such as **Active Surveillance** or **Watchful Waiting**
- The majority of men will be good candidates for surgery (robotic or open radical prostatectomy) or radiation, and we will discuss the pros and cons of each, and your suitability for each treatment.
- Active Surveillance involves keeping a close eye on the man with a small amount of low risk prostate cancer, as these men may be able to defer or avoid radical treatment. In the best case scenario, surgery or radiation is never required.
- Watchful Waiting is usually performed in men who have a reduced life expectancy due to other medical conditions, and who will not benefit from radical treatment of their cancer. Instead, delayed hormonal treatment (either continuous or intermittent) is the treatment of choice.

----- Benign Prostatic Enlargement -----

What problems does it cause?

Male Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (LUTS)

- With increasing age, the prostate enlarges, and can cause a variety of symptoms, including: poor flow, a feeling of incomplete bladder emptying, increased frequency in going to the toilet both during the day and at night, having little warning to go to the toilet (urgency) and at its worst, urge incontinence.

What treatment options are there?

After a thorough assessment (medical history, physical exam, urinary flow rate, renal ultrasound scan and a specialised questionnaire) to gain an accurate picture of the extent and severity of your symptoms, treatment options consist of:

- Medication
- Surgery (Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate)



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