

If you love your prostate then take this test

Written by Men's Health Network
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When dealing with health problems it's important to know how severe the disease is. Knowing this drives a series of treatment decisions, which may improve the symptoms, and in many cases even cure the disease. When the condition's level of aggressiveness is unknown, a traditionally beneficial treatment may instead cause harm.

The aggressiveness of prostate cancer is hard to determine. Traditionally, physicians have used the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level, a physical exam, and other methods to estimate the level of prostate cancer to help guide treatment decisions. These are helpful, but they cannot fully determine whether a man has low-risk prostate cancer, which can be managed with active surveillance, or whether he has aggressive prostate cancer, that should be treated immediately.

Active surveillance is a plan that employs careful and consistent monitoring of the cancer in a man's prostate without removing it. Under active surveillance, patients have regular check-ups and periodic PSA blood tests, clinical exams and potential biopsies to closely monitor for signs of prostate cancer progression. If the cancer starts getting worse, then an appropriate treatment can be decided on.

New diagnostic tests have been emerging, such as the Oncotype DX prostate cancer test, that can help the patient and his physician make a better decision about how to treat the cancer based on its aggressiveness.

More than 240,000 U.S. men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year. About half of newly-diagnosed patients will be classified as low risk and may not require immediate or aggressive treatment. Yet many of these men will receive immediate aggressive treatment despite the small chance of their cancer becoming deadly.

A new website was launched in September (Prostate Cancer Awareness Month) that helps patients and their families navigate the decision-making process, My Prostate Cancer Coach, found at www.MyProstateCancerCoach.org.

The site allows anyone interested in learning more about prostate cancer to gain accurate information on the disease and how it can affect men and those in their lives. Tools from the site include Prostate Cancer 101, providing information about treatment options, side effects, understanding the diagnosis and PSA testing, as well as a glossary of terms that can help patients better understand the disease. By answering a few simple questions about your diagnosis, a man receives a personalized guide outlining how aggressive a his disease is likely to be and highlighting key questions to help you have a more productive discussion with the healthcare team.

The My Prostate Cancer Coach web site also provides visitors with resources to better understand their risk for getting prostate cancer, questions to ask their doctor, and other resources relating to prostate cancer.

To learn more about other prostate conditions, visit the Prostate Health Guide at www.prostatehealthguide.com

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One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. The chances of surviving prostate cancer increase if you detect the cancer early and make an informed decision about treatment. Don't be another statistic - be proactive – remember prostate cancer is almost 100% treatable if detected early and treated right.

[Men's Health Network](#) (MHN) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health prevention messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation. Learn more about MHN at

www.menshealthnetwork.org

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