

Additional Information on PSA

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in Scotland, accounting for around 4,700 diagnoses each year.

Men, transgender women (prostate not removed during genital reconstructive surgery), non-binary people with male as their biological sex and some intersex people have a prostate gland. If vagino/vulvoplasty has been carried out the prostate can be examined via the anterior wall of the vagina.

Risk factors for Prostate Cancer include:

- Father or brother with prostate cancer
- Black or mixed black ethnicity (the lifetime risk of prostate cancer in black men is double that of white men)
- Men Carrying a BRCA gene variant

Early prostate cancer is often asymptomatic. Prostate cancer can present with lower urinary tract symptoms. Symptoms suggestive of advanced or metastatic prostate cancer include back pain, bone pain, fatigue, or weight loss. See [Malignant spinal cord compression | Right Decisions](#).

There is no agreed screening programme for prostate cancer in the United Kingdom. There is an informed choice programme called the [Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme \(PCRMP\)](#). This supports clinicians to give balanced information to men without symptoms of prostate disease who ask about a PSA test. The PCRMP was updated in December 2024 to clarify that PSA testing for asymptomatic men is not exclusively available to those aged 50 and over. The documents contain reference to NICE NG12. This is not relevant for NHS Scotland and instead the Scottish Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer should be followed for the referral of suspected prostate cancer.

In men aged 80 years or over, prostate cancer is commonly found but may not be clinically significant. It is recommended that PSA testing should be reserved for men aged 80 years or over in the following scenarios:

- Clinical features suggestive of metastatic prostate cancer (e.g. new significant bone pain, unexplained weight loss or unexplained anaemia)
- The man wants a PSA test after shared decision-making. The potential benefits of diagnosing and treating prostate cancer are greater in those with a good functional status and a longer life expectancy (10 plus years).

Performing a PSA test:

Before having a PSA test, patients should not have had the following within the prior 6 weeks:

- A suspected or proven UTI or prostatitis
- had a prostate biopsy or instrumentation (including catheterisation)

Or the following within the last 48 hours:

- ejaculated
- exercised vigorously

The PSA blood test should arrive at the lab within 16 hours.