

Back to Basics: Get Screened

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Simple. Easy. Lifesaving. Yet, the PSA blood test for prostate cancer has been underutilized in recent years, with severe consequences. How severe? A study in

2016 of over half a million men found significant increases in advanced prostate cancer, including metastases to distant organs.

Clearly, something had changed. "We went from where everybody got PSAs to where very few people get them," says Dr. James W. Young, board certified urologist at the Urology Institute of Central Florida. "All of a sudden we were diagnosing a lot more patients that had advanced prostate cancer at the time of diagnosis."

The PSA, a blood test for prostate-specific

antigen, revolutionized prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment. "When I came into practice in 1982 there was no screening test for prostate cancer," Dr. Young says. "Back in those times, when we diagnosed somebody with prostate cancer, most likely they had cancer that was already advanced and not curable."

The PSA test was introduced in the 1980s. PSA is released into the bloodstream from cells in the prostate, a walnut-sized gland that makes seminal fluid for carrying sperm. Elevated PSA levels can mean cancer is present. Testing ramped up in the 1980s and 1990s, and diagnoses of advanced prostate cancer plummeted.

"We were diagnosing everybody before they had cancer that had spread everywhere," Dr. Young continues.

"They were potentially curable." Why did testing drop off so dramatically? In 2008, the



US Preventive Services Task Force, part of the US Department of Health and Human Services, recommended against PSA screening for men age 75 and older. In 2012 they updated their recommendation to include all age levels, letting doctors discuss the issue with their patients instead. Their reasons included overdiagnosis and overtreatment, but recent research published in the New England Journal of Medicine suggests their guidance may be too extreme.

"We have the ability to find prostate cancers early," Dr. Young says. "Why aren't we taking more steps when it's easily treatable? It's completely preventable with annual testing." Dr. Young recommends that every male get a PSA test once a year, starting at age 50. "Unless you have a close family history of prostate cancer or if you're an African American. Then it's age 40."

Dr. Young's articles about prostate cancer screening and treatment can be found at prostateevaluation.com.

Did You Know?

Early-stage prostate cancer usually has no symptoms, but they can show up later. Symptoms include having to pee more often, especially at night, or straining to empty your bladder; blood in your urine or seminal fluid; new onset of erectile dysfunction; discomfort or pain when sitting (caused by an enlarged prostate); or, less commonly, pain or burning during urination. Other symptoms can occur if cancer has spread beyond the prostate gland.

191,930

New cases of prostate cancer in the U.S. estimated in 2020

#2

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in US men

60% higher

The number of new prostate cancer diagnoses in black men compared to white men

66

Average age of prostate cancer diagnosis



What is PSA Velocity?

Elevated PSA readings could indicate the presence of cancer, but another important measurement is how fast those readings increase. The speed of increase is called PSA velocity. Studies show that if a PSA velocity is over 0.35 ng/mL (nanograms per milliliter) per year, and if the patient has prostate cancer, it is more likely to be an aggressive cancer.

RB  **I** ROBERT BOISSONEAULT ONCOLOGY INSTITUTE

A Higher Standard

Patient-centered radiation oncology close to home

The Villages 352.259.2200
Ocala 352.732.0277
Timber Ridge 352.861.2400
Inverness 352.726.3400
Lecanto 352.527.0106

RBOI.com

 Like us on Facebook