

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)

This information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to diagnosis, treat, cure, or prevent disease. Abnormal test values falling outside the Normal Range will be printed in bold and noted in the "Flag" column. Abnormal values should be reviewed by your primary physician and a copy of all testing should be included in your medical record for future reference and comparison.

Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is a protein produced by the cells of the prostate gland. The PSA is measured in the blood to detect possible abnormalities of the prostate gland. Because PSA is produced by the body and can be used to detect disease, it is sometimes called a biological marker or tumor marker.

It is normal for men to have low levels of PSA in their blood; however, the level of PSA can elevate in either prostate cancer or in a benign (non cancerous) condition. As men age the occurrences of benign prostate conditions and of prostate cancer become more likely. The most common benign prostate conditions are prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) and benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) (enlargement of the prostate).

Elevated PSA levels should be evaluated in conjunction with a prostate examination conducted by a physician.

Yearly screening is recommended for men over age 40. Men who are at a higher risk for prostate cancer should begin screening at an earlier age.

Risk factors for prostate cancer include family history, race, and possibly diet. Men who have a father or brother with prostate cancer have a greater chance of developing prostate cancer. African American men have the highest rate of prostate cancer, while Asian and Native American men have the lowest rates. In addition, there is some evidence that a diet higher in fat, especially animal fat, may increase the risk of prostate cancer.