

# PSA information for men

For men aged 40 and over



## What is a PSA Test?

The Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test is a blood test that measures the level of PSA in your blood. PSA is a substance made by the prostate gland which naturally leaks into the bloodstream. A raised PSA can be an early indication of prostate cancer. However, other conditions which are not cancer (e.g. enlargement of the prostate, prostatitis, urinary infection) can also cause a rise in PSA. The PSA test can also fail to detect cancers, i.e. not all men with prostate cancer have a raised PSA.

The test itself requires taking a sample of blood and for specialist analysis to detect the amount of PSA in the blood stream.

## Benefits of PSA testing

- It may provide reassurance if the test result is normal
- It may detect cancer at an early stage when treatments could be beneficial
- If treatment is successful, the consequences of more advanced cancer are avoided

## Downside of PSA testing

- It can miss cancer and provide false reassurance
- It may lead to unnecessary anxiety and medical tests where no cancer is present
- It might detect slow growing cancer that may never cause any symptoms or shortening of life span

## Can anything affect the test results?

- Urinary infections
- Long periods of exercise, especially cycling, in the last 48 hours
- **Ejaculation in the last 48 hours**
- Drugs such as finasteride (Proscar)

## What happens if you have a raised PSA result?

All men with a raised PSA (outside of normal range) will be advised to discuss the result with their GP.