

Optimal Care Pathways: PSA Testing for Prostate Cancer

The current guidelines on PSA testing in Australia and overseas advise shared decision making between the doctor and the patient. Potential benefits and harms of PSA testing need to be discussed to allow informed consent or informed refusal to proceed.

The key things to remember about PSA testing are:

- Offer men the opportunity to discuss the benefits and harms of PSA testing before making a decision
- The harms of PSA testing may outweigh the benefits, particularly in men over 70 years of age
- Men at average risk who decide to have regular testing should be offered PSA testing every 2 years from age 50-69
- Men with a family history of prostate cancer who decide to be tested should be offered PSA testing every 2 years from 40/45 to 69 depending on their risk of prostate cancer
- Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) is not recommended in primary care for asymptomatic men as part of PSA testing
- Make sure the patient knows that they are being tested for PSA, don't just include it with a battery of other blood tests.

For more information

- **Optimal Care Pathways for prostate cancer** can be accessed via the [cancer council victoria website](http://cancer.council.victoria.gov.au)
- **Optimal Care Pathways PSA Testing Video: [PSA testing for prostate cancer video](#)**: Talking to patients about the pros and cons of PSA testing and the importance of shared decision making. This video shows three brief scenarios that model ways in which a discussion with a patient could proceed in different situations.

Optimal Care Pathways for prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in men in Australia and fortunately has a very high five-year survival rate (94%). However, a significant subgroup of patients report poor quality of life post treatment, such as erectile dysfunction and urinary incontinence.

In Victoria, all six PHNs are working together to promote the adoption of the prostate cancer Optimal Care Pathway into primary health in 2018. This project is supported by the Victorian Government.

Following the Optimal Care Pathway has the potential to significantly improve the experience for patients by building general practice's awareness of symptoms,

PSA testing guidelines, referral pathways, management options and supportive care needs. Men should be fully informed before making final decisions on either PSA testing or management of prostate cancer if found.