

PSA screening

Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) is found in prostatic cells and in the semen of men with prostatic tissue. PSA is elevated in both BPH and cancer. All men have PSA measurable in their blood, except for those who have had a radical prostatectomy.

This level increases with age and although a PSA of greater than 10ng/ml indicates a risk of cancer in about 50% of cases, it may sometimes be regarded as normal in men over 70 years of age, particularly if there is significant enlargement of the gland.

A PSA level between 4ng/ml and 10ng/ml should be further investigated as both BPH and localised carcinoma can cause these readings.

A combination of PSA and rectal examination produces a high pick up rate of prostate cancer with sequential PSA and transrectal ultrasound guided biopsy optimising detection.

Interpreting the PSA

| PSA value | Interpretation |
|-------------------|---|
| 0.5 - 4 ng/ml | Normal |
| 4 - 10 ng/ml | 20% chance of cancer |
| >10 ng/ml | 50%+ chance of cancer |
| Rise of >20%/year | Refer immediately for consideration of biopsy |