Prostate Cancer Screening Informational Handout for Patients

Background

- Prostate Cancer is the most common cancer in men and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} leading cause of cancer death in men. It is usually found in men older than 60.
- Many Prostate Cancers grow so slowly that they will never need treatment, but some are aggressive and dangerous.
- Doctors are currently undecided on whether to test all men for prostate cancer with a blood test called PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen). The current recommendation is to ask our patients what they would prefer.

What is PSA screening?

- PSA is a substance released by the prostate into the blood. A normal blood test can measure how much there is in your blood.
- High levels of PSA in your blood may mean that you have a prostate cancer. It also may mean that you have non-threatening prostate growth.

Who is at Increased Risk?

- African Americans and men with a first degree relative (father, son or brother) with prostate cancer are at increased risk of developing prostate cancer.

What is a Normal Level?

- Most doctors agree that a PSA level larger than 4 is considered a positive test.

What Happens if the Test is Positive?

- If your level is higher than 4 you will likely be referred to a Urologist (Prostate Doctor) to determine the next step. This could involve more blood tests or a biopsy of your prostate.

Why is Testing a Good Idea?

- The PSA blood test has been shown to detect Prostate Cancer years before symptoms begin and some studies have shown men who get the blood test are less likely to die from Prostate Cancer.

Why is Testing a Bad Idea?

- Many people that the test is positive for don’t actually have prostate cancer.
- Some people that have prostate cancer will not require treatment because many Prostate Cancers grow so slowly.
- Testing leads to more prostate biopsies which have a risk of bleeding and prostate infection.
- Prostate removal surgery can make it difficult to hold in your urine and get an erection.

More Resources

https://www.cancer.gov/types/prostate