

WHAT EVERY MAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PROSTATE CANCER

*By Stephen B. Strum, MD, FACP and Donna Pogliano, co-authors of
“A Primer on Prostate Cancer, The Empowered Patient’s Guide”
with collaboration from UK resident, John Inchley*

If someone in your family had prostate cancer or breast cancer, then *you* are more likely to get prostate cancer. Prostate cancer can have no signs, so it is important that you should be tested every year from the age of 50.

Testing is done in two parts –

1. The PSA blood test. A PSA of 3 or more should be checked to rule out cancer. A PSA that keeps rising, *even* if it is still below 3, should also be checked. Prostate cancer is easier to deal with if it is caught early.
2. The DRE (digital rectal exam). This is a simple test to feel and check the prostate. If you are not given a DRE, you should ask for it to be done as it can help find cancer that can be cured.

If your test results need to be looked at to rule out cancer, the first steps should be:

- ✓ To check your free PSA percentage. A free PSA percentage over 25 can mean that there is a low risk of cancer. A free PSA percentage of 15 or under can mean there is a high risk.
- ✓ To check you for an infection of the prostate, which can cause a raised PSA and low free PSA. Treatment with an antibiotic for up to six weeks can help find out if a raised PSA is *not* due to cancer.
- ✓ To check for BPH. This can make PSA rise but does not give a low free PSA percentage. BPH makes the prostate get bigger, and your doctor will notice this when the DRE is done.