

Genetic Testing for Prostate Cancer

Talking to Your Doctor



This fact sheet is meant for all people with a prostate gland. It is of great value to know that all people who are born genetically male have a prostate. Any gender can have a prostate and everyone with a prostate should be aware of prostate cancer. Learning you have prostate cancer may be unsettling. You may have a lot to think about, including treatment choices and your future.

You may have heard that genetics can play a role in a person developing cancer. As a result, genetic testing may provide a way to point out a person's risk for prostate cancer. If you've been told you have prostate cancer, or if you have a close family member who has prostate cancer, genetic testing can tell you a lot. By learning more about genetic testing for prostate cancer, you may feel more ready to talk with your doctor. Your health care team is there to help, and they value your questions.

Tips to Help You Get Started

At many stages in the cancer journey, genetic tests may help. It's never a bad time to start talking with your doctor.

Here are a few questions you may wish to ask your health care team:

- o Is genetic testing right for me?
- o What will I learn from a genetic test and how will that impact my treatment?
- o Who will be doing the tests?
- o What does a genetic test involve and what are the risks?
- o Could there be an impact on health, life or disability insurance?
- o What are the next steps for me after testing?

- o What should my family know about my genetic test results?
- o Are the results private?

How Genetic Test Results May Help Doctors Treat Prostate Cancer

In the cancer world, genetic testing looks for certain variants which may have been passed down through your family or acquired that may raise the cancer risk or offer data on the cancer aggressiveness. There are certain variants, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, which can raise the risk of a person developing prostate cancer. These genes can also put men at a greater risk of getting more aggressive prostate cancer. Also, people who carry variants in these genes can be at risk of developing other cancers, such as breast cancer and pancreatic cancer.

There are two ways genetic test results may help doctors treat prostate cancer:

- 1. For people *without* prostate cancer,** but with a known variant in one of these key genes, earlier cancer testing may be needed. Their doctor may suggest striving for a healthy food plan, workouts and to stop any tobacco use as ways to lessen the risk of getting prostate cancer.
- 2. For people *with* prostate cancer,** genetic test results may help doctors learn if the cancer is more likely to be aggressive. For those with advanced prostate cancer, some treatments may be more helpful in patients with one of these variants.



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Why Talking with Your Doctor May Help

Doctors who work with prostate cancer patients may be able to tell you about treatment options based on genetic test results. Also, genetic testing may allow family members with inherited genetic risks to be screened earlier.

Your doctor may suggest you speak with a genetic counselor. These experts may help you think about how the results of genetic tests may impact you before you decide to get tested. There may be great value in talking about how results could impact you and your family members as well as health, life and disability insurance.

If your doctor is not familiar with genetic testing, ask if they can suggest an expert who can talk with you further.

About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions.

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