Psa Blood Test

What Is A Psa Blood Test?

Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is a protein produced by both normal and cancerous prostate cells. Some of this protein naturally enters the bloodstream, but levels may rise if the prostate is damaged. The PSA blood test measures the level of PSA in your blood, expressed in micrograms per litre (µg/L), and is a key tool in the early detection of prostate cancer.

Who Should Consider A Psa Test?

PSA testing is recommended for:

- Men at increased risk of prostate cancer:
    - Men over 50
    - Men with a family history of prostate cancer
    - Black men over 45
- Men exhibiting symptoms that may indicate prostate cancer. Learn more about these symptoms.

The PSA test is a simple blood test. Elevated PSA levels may suggest prostate cancer, but benign conditions like benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) can also raise PSA levels.

Why Test For Psa Levels?

The PSA blood test helps in diagnosing prostate cancer, but PSA testing alone is not a reliable method for diagnosing prostate cancer because:

- Some men may have prostate cancer despite low PSA levels.
- High PSA levels do not always signify prostate cancer.
- PSA tests do not differentiate between aggressive and slow-growing cancers.

Psa Screening

At Birmingham Prostate Centre, we understand the complexities surrounding prostate cancer screening. While there is no national screening programme in the UK, the NHS offers an informed choice PSA testing programme. This allows men to decide whether to undergo a PSA test based on their individual risk factors and preferences.

The role of PSA testing in prostate cancer detection:

- **Screening challenges**: PSA blood tests alone are not a reliable method for diagnosing prostate cancer, as they require additional tests for confirmation. This approach can lead to unnecessary prostate biopsies, especially in cases of false positive results.
- **Advancements at our clinic**: We use multiparametric MRI scans before proceeding to a biopsy. The biopsy techniques we employ are modern and less invasive, significantly reducing the side effects compared to traditional methods. These improvements have decreased the risks associated with unnecessary biopsies.

Concerns and benefits of PSA screening:

- **Potential risks**: Some men might receive low PSA results and yet still have prostate cancer, leading to false reassurance. Additionally, screening might identify slow-growing cancers that would not impact a man's natural lifetime.
- **Evidence and improvements**: There is growing evidence that screening, particularly in men aged 50 and over or those 45 and older with risk factors, can reduce mortality from prostate cancer. With the advent of mpMRI and updated biopsy techniques, concerns about unnecessary biopsies and complications have lessened.

At Birmingham Prostate Centre, we are committed to providing informed, up-to-date screening options that align with the latest medical standards and research. We aim to reduce the risks associated with prostate cancer while supporting our patients' needs and choices.

Should I Have My Psa Checked?

Birmingham Prostate Centre advises PSA screening for all men at increased risk:

- Age 50 or older
- Age 45 or older with one or more of the following risk factors:
    - Family history of prostate cancer
    - Black or mixed black ethnic origin
    - Overweight
    - Rare genetic mutations, such as BRCA

How To Prepare For Your Psa Test

Inform your doctor about any medications or supplements you're taking, as these can affect PSA levels. Avoid vigorous exercise and ejaculation for at least 48 hours before the test to ensure accurate results.

What Happens During A Psa Test?

The PSA test is a straightforward procedure conducted at our clinic. Results are quickly processed, usually within 48 hours and your urologist will discuss the findings with you to determine the next steps if necessary.

Benefits And Disadvantages Of Psa Screening

Benefits:

- Early detection of prostate cancer, potentially before symptoms develop, facilitating timely and effective treatment.
- Provides reassurance for men with low PSA levels.

Disadvantages:

- Risk of false positives and over-diagnosis, leading to unnecessary tests and treatments.
- Potential for unnecessary anxiety.
- May miss some cancers, giving false reassurance.

What Should I Do If My Psa Is High?

If your PSA level is high, consult with a urologist at Birmingham Prostate Centre or through your GP. We will discuss further investigations, including an mpMRI and potentially a prostate biopsy based on the scan results. A repeat PSA test may also be requested depending on your symptoms.

Schedule Your Psa Screening Today

Take control of your health by scheduling a PSA screening at Birmingham Prostate Centre. Our expert team provides comprehensive care and support throughout the screening process.

Contact us today to book a PSA blood test or to discuss further tests if you have a raised PSA. Our friendly staff are here to assist you and ensure you receive the best possible care.