WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING PROSTATE CANCER?

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men, and the second leading cause of cancer death in men. One in seven men will be diagnosed in his lifetime. African-American men and men with a family history of prostate cancer have a higher chance of getting the disease. Prostate cancer is different from many cancers because it often grows very slowly and may not cause problems. In 2012, more than 240,000 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer, and only about 28,000 American men died of the disease. Many men with prostate cancer will never know they have it unless they get tested.

SHOULD I GET SCREENED FOR PROSTATE CANCER?

THERE ARE POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO HAVING A PSA TEST.
- A normal PSA test may put your mind at ease.
- A PSA test may find prostate cancer early before it has spread.
- Early treatment of prostate cancer may help some men to avoid problems from cancer.
- Early treatment of prostate cancer may help some men live longer.

THERE ARE POSSIBLE RISKS OF HAVING A PSA TEST.
- A normal PSA test may miss some prostate cancers (a “false negative”).
- Sometimes the test results suggest something is wrong when it isn’t (a “false positive”). This can cause unneeded worry and stress.
- A “false positive” PSA test may lead to an unneeded prostate biopsy (tissue sample).
- A high PSA test may find a prostate cancer that is slow-growing and never would have caused you problems.
- Treatment of prostate cancer may cause you harm. Problems with getting erections, leaking urine or bowel function can occur.
- According to the American Urological Association, in asymptomatic men, the greatest benefit of routine screening can be found in men ages 55 to 69 years. Men younger than 55 or older than 69 who are worried about their personal risk factors should talk with their health care provider to determine whether prostate cancer screening is appropriate.

The American Urological Association recommends against prostate cancer screening in men under 40 years and in men age 70+ years with a life expectancy of less than 10 – 15 years. In general, routine prostate cancer testing is not recommended. However, if you have concerns about your prostate or urinary health, we urge you to talk with your health care provider to see if testing is right for you.