

Ask 'Doctor D'

about prostate cancer



Ask 'Doctor D' is your opportunity to put questions people often want answers to, but don't like to ask, to the Doctors based at St. Andrews.

Calling all men out there!!!

Do you have symptoms of?

- urinary frequency
- having to rush to the loo
- difficulty starting to urinate
- poor stream
- having to get up at night
- blood in your urine or semen

Don't accept this as ageing – if you've got any problem with your plumbing PLEASE come and chat with your Doctor - don't put it off!

There are many causes for these symptoms but today we are talking prostates!

The prostate gland has an annoying habit of increasing in size as men age and this can cause all sorts of urinary symptoms.

In most cases this is diagnosed as *benign prostatic hypertrophy*. However, in a small number of cases this can be a sign of prostate cancer.

Is there a test for prostate cancer?

You may have heard of a 'PSA test.' This is a blood test which measures a marker in the blood, and is secreted by the prostate gland in all men. Production of PSA secreted by the prostate can increase as a result of prostate cancer; but it can also be caused if the prostate gets irritated, for example by a bicycle ride, constipation, or infection. Due to these phenomena, it is not deemed a good screening test and should only be used in combination with an examination and supportive symptoms.

PSA alone however is a poor predictor of prostate cancer.

Should I have an annual PSA test?

PSA testing is not recommended in men who do not have symptoms which require investigation.

The guidance is that raised PSA levels are common and can lead to additional tests which could be harmful.

Annual PSA testing is only recommended in men with a low risk prostate cancer for monitoring, or for those who have undergone prostate cancer treatment.

A medical review of all the evidence regarding prostate screening in the British Medical Journal concluded that PSA screening results in at most, a small reduction in prostate cancer mortality, but at a cost of considerable potential harm resulting from the dangers of over diagnosis and treatment, such as impotence and urinary incontinence.

PSA should however, be considered in men with any of the symptoms listed.

Other Doctor D advice leaflets

Go to **Forms and Leaflets** on our website - www.standrewsmc-southborough.nhs.uk - and take a look at:

Doctor D on Acne

Doctor D on Tiredness

Doctor D on Childhood obesity

Doctor D on Hay fever

Doctor D on Colds & coughs

Doctor D on Jet lag