

PSA Test

What is the PSA test?

The PSA test measures the level of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in the blood. PSA is a protein made by the prostate gland. The prostate gland is part of a man's reproductive system. It is about the size of a walnut and located between the bladder and the penis. The prostate gland surrounds the upper part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. It makes fluid that nourishes sperm and helps carry it out of the body during sex.

Why is this test done?

The PSA test can help check for disease in the prostate gland. It may be done, along with a rectal exam, to screen for prostate cancer or, if you have prostate cancer and have undergone treatment, to see how well the treatment is working.

The benefits of prostate cancer screening are not certain. Men younger than age 70 should talk to their healthcare provider about the benefits and harms of screening. The current recommendations are that men age 70 and older do not need to be screened for prostate cancer.

How do I prepare for this test?

- Avoid having sex for at least 24 hours before your test. Having an orgasm with ejaculation during this time might make your PSA level higher than normal.
- You may need to avoid taking certain medicines before the test because they might affect the test result. Make sure your healthcare provider knows about any medicines, herbs, or supplements that you are taking. Don't stop any of your regular medicines without first consulting with your healthcare provider.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

How is the test done?

Having this test will take just a few minutes. A small amount of blood is taken from your arm with a needle. The blood is collected in tubes and sent to a lab.

How will I get the test result?

Ask your healthcare provider when and how you will get the results of your test.

What does the test result mean?

The normal range for the PSA test is less than 4 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) in most men. If you are over 40 years old and have a family history of prostate disease or if you are an African-American man over 40 years old, some healthcare providers suggest that a level higher than 2.5 ng/mL should be checked with more tests. These 2 groups of men have an increased risk of prostate cancer.

The PSA level may be higher than normal if:

- You have benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is a common condition of older men that occurs when the prostate grows larger with aging. BPH is not a form of cancer.
- You have a condition that inflames or irritates the prostate gland. Examples of such conditions are infection of the prostate gland (prostatitis), severe infection elsewhere in the body, injury, biopsy, vigorous massage, heart attack or recent heart bypass surgery, Foley catheter placement, or endoscopy of the bladder or kidney through the urethra.
- You have sex with ejaculation within 24 hours before the test.
- You have prostate cancer.

What if my test result is not normal?

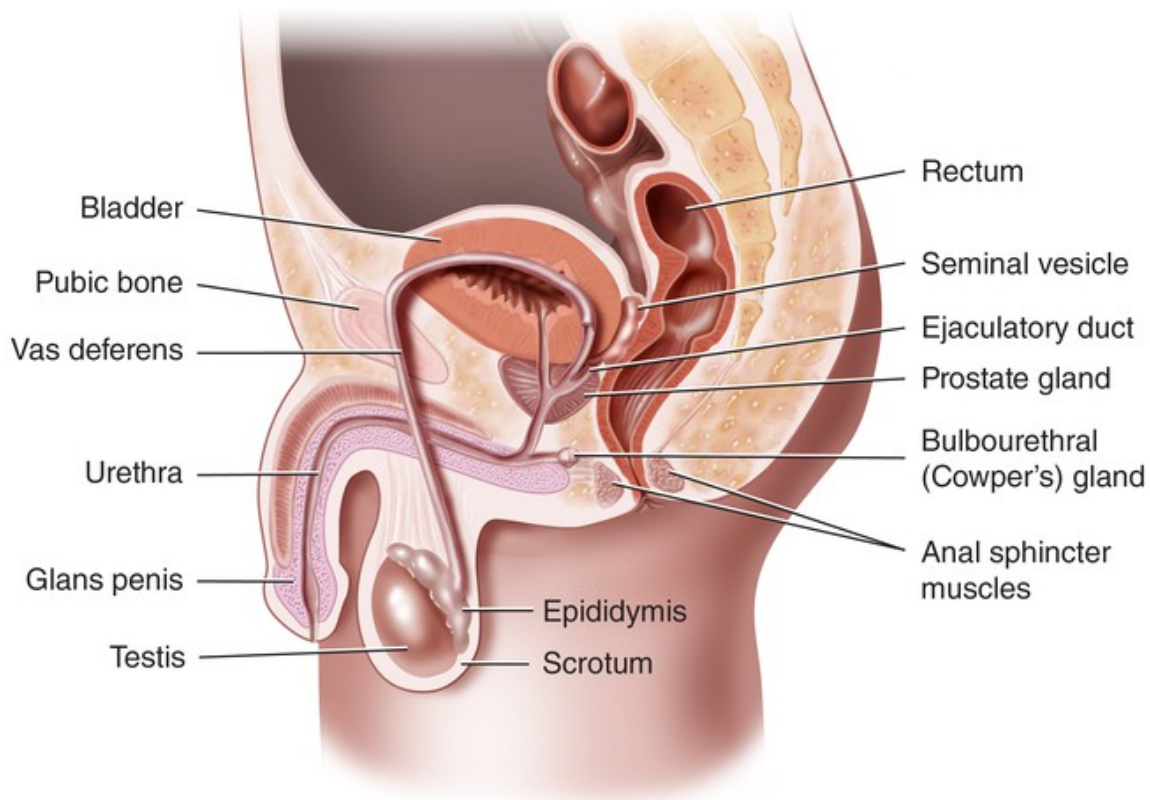
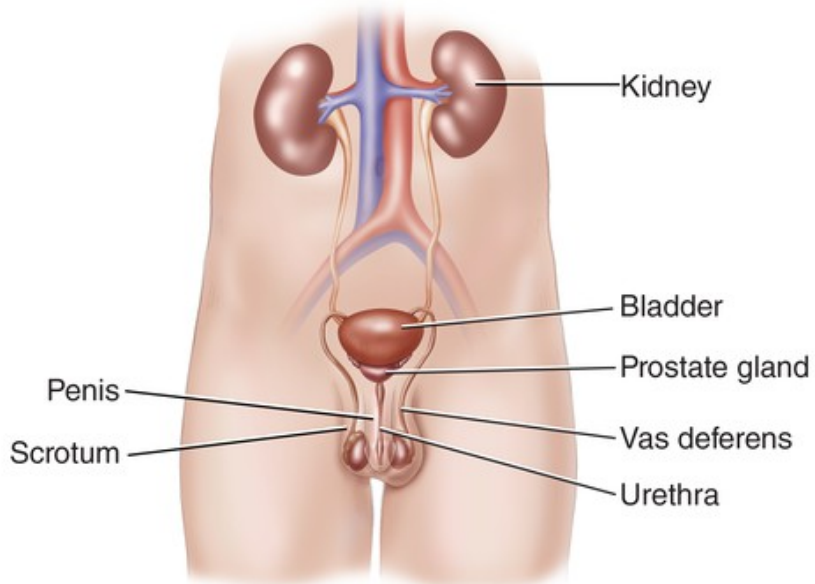
Test results are only one part of a larger picture that takes into account your medical history and current health. Sometimes a test needs to be repeated to check the first result. Talk to your healthcare provider about your result and ask questions such as:

- If you need more tests
- What kind of treatment you might need
- When you need to be tested again
- What lifestyle, diet, or other changes you might need to make

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Male Pelvis



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