

MEN'S HEALTH

The Importance Of Early Detection

(NAPSA)—There may be good news for men with prostate cancer. With early diagnosis, radical treatment may not be necessary.

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) recommends screening to ensure early detection. Cancers found by digital rectal examination (DRE) or prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing are, on average, smaller and have spread less than cancers discovered because of symptoms they cause.

For men with cancer that has not spread beyond the prostate gland, the five-year survival rate is near 100 percent. However, before early detection tests were widely used, most men with prostate cancer were diagnosed with advanced disease and most died within a few years of the diagnosis.

The prostate cancer death rate has dropped significantly since prostate cancer testing became relatively common. Studies are under way to try to prove that early detection will lower prostate cancer death rates. The decision as to whether a man should be tested is left up to him and his health care professional.

Because there are no early symptoms of prostate cancer, NCCN recommends that a DRE be done yearly and a PSA blood

Timing For Prostate Tests

- NCCN recommends a digital rectal exam be done annually and that a prostate-specific antigen test be offered to men over 50 with at least a 10-year life expectancy and to younger men at high risk for prostate cancer.
- The American Cancer Society further recommends that African-American men and men with a strong family history of prostate cancer begin testing at age 45. (T)

test be offered to men age 50 and over who have at least a 10-year life expectancy and to younger men who are at high risk.

Depending on the results of the initial PSA, men may only need the test repeated every two years. African-American men and men with a strong family history of prostate cancer (such as a father or brother diagnosed at a young age) should begin testing at age 45. Men with multiple first-degree relatives affected at a young age can even begin screening at age 40. All men should be told about the benefits and risks of testing as well as the pros and cons of treatment.

Order a copy of the NCCN Prostate Cancer Treatment Guidelines for Patients at www.nccn.org.