

USPSTF Prostate Cancer Screening Recommendation:

What are the benefits and harms of prostate cancer screening?

After a comprehensive review of the evidence, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force found:

Possible benefit of screening

The reduction in prostate cancer deaths from prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening is at most very small. A large U.S. study showed no benefit from screening. A large European study that found the highest reported benefit suggests:

- **1 man in 1,000 – at most – avoids death from prostate cancer because of screening**

Expected harms of screening

Most prostate cancers found by PSA screening are slow growing, not life threatening, and will not cause a man any harm during his lifetime. However, there is currently no way to determine which cancers are likely to threaten a man's health and which will not. As a result, almost all men with PSA-detected prostate cancer opt to receive treatment. In addition to the frequent complications of biopsy that lead to a cancer diagnosis, there can be serious harms from treatment of screen-detected prostate cancer.

For every 1,000 men who are screened with the PSA test:

- **30 to 40 men will develop erectile dysfunction or urinary incontinence due to treatment**
- **2 men will experience a serious cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack, due to treatment**
- **1 man will develop a serious blood clot in his leg or lungs due to treatment**

For every 3,000 men who are screened with the PSA test:

- **1 man will die due to complications from surgical treatment**

To learn more about the USPSTF's prostate cancer recommendation, please visit:
<http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/prostatecancerscreening.htm>

The USPSTF is an independent group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, or preventive medications.

Note: These estimates describe the possible benefits and harms for men aged 55-69 who are screened with a PSA test every 1-4 years for 10 years.