

# Specific Tests for Men – What You Need to Know

## Prostate Cancer Screening - Digital Rectal Exam

Why you need this:	Used as a screening tool for an enlarged prostate gland and for the possible presence of prostate cancer and tumors in the rectum.
What to expect:	The doctor inserts a gloved and lubricated finger into the anus to feel the prostate gland through the front wall of the rectum. The doctor feels for lumps or hard areas and for an enlarged prostate. This can feel uncomfortable, but does not usually cause pain.
What the results mean:	If a lump or other problem is felt, the doctor may prescribe follow-up tests.

## Prostate Cancer Screening - Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)

Why you need this:	Used as a screening tool for the possible presence of prostate cancer.
What to do before the test:	Avoid having sex 24 hours before the test. Find out ahead of time, from your doctor, if you need to delay or skip any medicines you take until after the test.
What to expect:	A blood sample is taken, usually from a vein in the arm. The sample is sent to a lab.
What the results mean:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The results give the blood level of prostate-specific antigen, (a protein made by the prostate gland) in nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL). The upper limit of “normal” is 4.0 ng/mL. Levels above this do not mean prostate cancer is present for sure.</li><li>• Elevated PSA levels can also be from an enlarged prostate and prostate gland infections. Also, cancer can be present at levels below 4.0 ng/mL. Discuss the benefits and risks of PSA testing with your doctor. How much your PSA level changes from year to year, your age, and other medical problems you have are factors your doctor may consider in deciding about extra tests, such as a biopsy for prostate cancer.</li></ul>

## Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening

Why you need this:	The aorta is the main artery in the body. It extends upward from the heart, curves behind the heart, and runs downward through the chest and into the abdomen. The part in the abdomen is called the abdominal aorta. An aneurysm is a balloon-like swelling in a blood vessel wall. If this gets too big, the aorta can burst or tear. This is life threatening. Major risk factors for an aneurysm in the aorta are: Being male; Being age 65 years or older; A history of smoking at least 100 cigarettes over a lifetime. An ultrasound test is used to screen for an AAA. This test uses sound waves to get an image of your aorta and other structures in the upper abdomen to check for problems.
What to do before the test:	You may need to avoid eating for 8 to 12 hours before the test.
What to expect:	The test is usually painless. It does not involve the use of needles, injections, or radiation. You will be given a gown to wear. You lie on your back on an exam table. A warm gel is applied to the skin on your abdomen. The technician firmly presses a hand-held instrument (a transducer) in a back and forth motion over the skin of your abdomen. The test takes about 30 minutes. The gel is wiped off. The test is done.
What the results mean:	A radiologist looks at the images and sends a report to your doctor. If a problem is found, your doctor will order follow-up testing or treatment, as needed.

