

Benefits of Prostate Cancer Screening Outweigh the Harms, Say New Guidelines

NCCN's free guidebook shows how prostate cancer screening can deemphasize invasive testing to avoid unnecessary procedures and treatment.

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PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA [April 28, 2026] — The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)—an alliance of leading cancer centers—has published a new book explaining the latest evidence and expert recommendations around prostate cancer screening. The new [NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Prostate Cancer Screening](#) address the myths, taboos, and outdated information that cause too many people to avoid this basic, life-saving care. They are based on the trusted recommendations that providers rely on worldwide, put into simple, understandable language for everyone.

Prostate cancer screening has been a controversial topic, because there are both pros (preventing death from prostate cancer) and cons (unnecessary biopsies, over-detection, and overtreatment). Some people may also avoid screening due to discomfort about digital exams that are now considered optional. It can be hard to impart all of the latest, critical information during a brief primary care visit, so the book offers another way to explain who should get screened, how, and why.

The NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Prostate Cancer Screening is now available for free download at [NCCN.org/patients](#) or via the [NCCN Patient Guides for Cancer App](#), thanks to funding from the [NCCN Foundation](#).

“People are surprised to learn that prostate cancer screening can be done with a simple blood test; there’s almost never a need for an invasive physical exam anymore,” said Preston C. Sprenkle, MD, Yale Cancer Center/Smilow Cancer Hospital, Chair of the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) Panel for Prostate Cancer Early Detection. “Screening for prostate cancer significantly reduces the likelihood of death from prostate cancer, but it’s important to start early, before any symptoms occur.”

“The NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Prostate Cancer Screening are divided into three segments by

age, beginning at 40 for those traditionally considered at high risk, 45 to 75 for all others, and a category for individuals older than 75,” added Thomas A. Farrington, President and Founder, Prostate Health Education Network (PHEN), who serves as a patient advocate on the NCCN Guidelines Panel for Prostate Cancer Early Detection. “The clear guidance for people falling into each of these segments makes this a very easy-to-understand guideline for all and distinguishes it from other early detection guidelines and recommendations.”

According to Panel Vice-Chair Tyler M. Seibert, MD, PhD, of UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center: “The goal with screening is to catch aggressive cancer early so that we can prevent it from spreading to other parts of the body. When prostate cancer is caught early, it is often curable. But when we are screening, we may also find some cancers that are not going to spread, and it is important to not overreact to low-grade tumors that can be safely monitored. The key is to find and cure the aggressive cancers while only treating the patients who need treatment.”

The patient guidelines reflect how medical knowledge of prostate cancer screening has evolved dramatically over the years. Doctors now have a much better understanding of which patients require additional testing to determine if they are likely to have aggressive prostate cancer and recommend numerous steps to make that testing—and any subsequent treatment—as tolerable as possible. That includes relying on imaging to determine if a biopsy is even needed when cancer is suspected. In many cases, it is enough to just monitor an individual with elevated prostate-specific antigen (PSA) for years, sometimes indefinitely.

“There is a tremendous spectrum of prostate cancer. While we strongly advocate for screening and testing early to detect aggressive cancer, we also are learning more each day on how to reduce the risk of unnecessary biopsies, over-detection, and overtreatment,” said Dr. Sprenkle.

The NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Prostate Cancer Screening link to additional resources that fully explain all of the treatment options for [Prostate Cancer: Early Stage](#), and [Prostate Cancer: Advanced Stage](#). There is another book devoted to the latest research on [Genetic Testing for Hereditary Breast, Ovarian, Pancreatic, and Prostate Cancers](#) to help everyone stay current on various familial risk factors.

The award-winning library features 75 trustworthy guides that cover nearly every type of cancer treatment, along with prevention, detection, and supportive care. NCCN and the NCCN Foundation recently announced a commitment to update each book once per year in both English and Spanish. Earlier versions of the prostate cancer patient guidelines have also been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, and Portuguese. Visit [NCCN.org/global](https://www.nccn.org/global) to learn more about all of the language translations available across different cancer types.

Printed versions of the NCCN Guidelines for Patients are available for a nominal fee at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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