Information for Informed Consent
Tests for Prostate Cancer

What is the prostate gland?
The prostate gland is under the bladder in men. It makes part of the semen.

What is prostate cancer?
- An overgrowth of the prostate gland.
- It is a common cancer — 1 in 6 men will develop it in their lifetimes, most after 50 years old. Most men with prostate cancer do not die from it.
- It is more common in African-American men than in white men.

What is the PSA test?
- It is a blood test.
- PSA is short for prostate-specific antigen. It is made by the prostate gland.
- It is sometimes used to find cancer of the prostate gland before there are symptoms. Men who have prostate cancer may have more PSA in their blood than other men.
- Other less serious problems can cause the PSA to go up too. They are
  - when the prostate gland gets bigger (common as you get older)
  - when there is inflammation (swelling)
  - when there is infection

What is the Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)?
- An exam of the rectum. A doctor or nurse uses a gloved finger and some lubricant to check the lower part of the rectum that is near the prostate gland.
- It is used to feel for a lump in the prostate or anything else unusual about the prostate.

Who should get the PSA test and/ or the DRE?
- Men who have symptoms of a prostate problem should be tested. Symptoms include
  - problems urinating
  - blood in the urine or semen
  - suddenly and then continuing to have a problem getting hard
- Men who should consider getting the PSA test are
  - men who have a close relative who had prostate cancer — when they are 45 or older
  - African American men - when they are 45 or older
  - All other men - when they are 50 or older
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- A doctor or nurse can help you make this decision.

What are the possible benefits of testing?
It may help find cancer earlier.

What are the possible harms of testing?
The test result could be wrong (false positive or false negative) and that could lead to anxiety and more tests.

What will happen if the PSA test is not normal?
It depends on your personal medical history and exam, as well as the level of your PSA. Your doctor or nurse may
- treat you with medicine if they think you have an infection and then repeat the PSA test
- refer you to a specialist to have further tests

Whether or not you decide to get a PSA test or DRE is up to you. We are happy to answer your questions.

Where can I get more information?
- The National Cancer Institute:
  http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/screening/prostate/Patient
- American Cancer Society:
  http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/ProstateCancer/MoreInformation/ProstateCancerEarlyDetection/index