



# Transrectal prostate ultrasound and biopsies

## Urological health

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Transrectal prostate  
ultrasound and  
biopsies Video

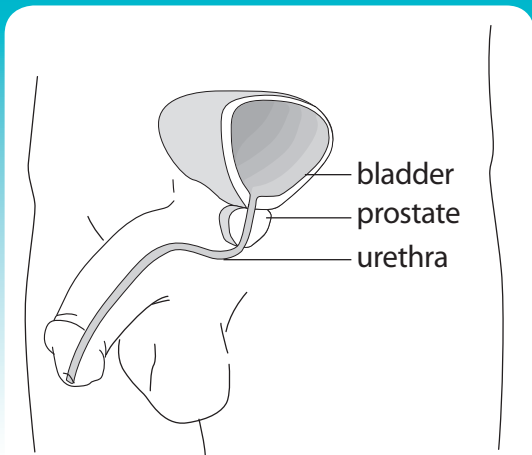
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Your doctor thinks you might have prostate cancer. An exam of your prostate using ultrasound and biopsies will help your doctor make a diagnosis.

### What does a prostate gland do?

- The prostate is a small gland about the size of a chestnut (in younger men).
- The prostate is underneath the bladder and wraps around the urinary passage (urethra). (See diagram: *Male lower urinary tract and genitals*.)
- It makes some of the semen that you ejaculate during sex.

Male lower urinary tract and genitals



### What is prostate cancer?

- Prostate cancer usually grows slowly.
- Often your doctor first finds the cancer by:
  - a finger examination of the prostate (called a digital rectal examination or **(DRE)** OR
  - a blood test showing a high level of **prostate specific antigen (PSA)**
- PSA is a protein made by the prostate gland.
  - Both cancerous and non-cancerous cells can produce this protein.
  - PSA levels may be higher in men who have prostate cancer.

### How is prostate cancer diagnosed?

- Your doctor will order tests for you if:
  - there is something suspicious found during your **DRE** OR
  - your blood test shows a high PSA level
- A prostate or rectal ultrasound examination and biopsies will help to decide if you have prostate cancer (see explanations below).
- It is important to understand that the prostate or PSA levels may be affected by many things, including:
  - having a larger-than-normal prostate **OR**
  - an infection or inflammation in the prostate

### What tests are used for a prostate cancer diagnosis?

#### Ultrasound

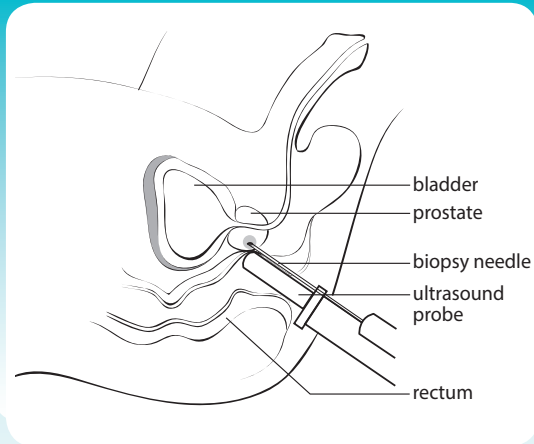
- **Transrectal ultrasound (TRUS)** examination sends a narrow probe through the anus into your rectum. (See diagram: *Ultrasound examination of the prostate through the rectum*)
- **Prostate ultrasound** helps to measure the size of the prostate and show an image of the interior surface. This is usually performed to help with the biopsy.

### What happens during an ultrasound examination?

- A urologist or ultrasound specialist, called a radiologist will carry out your examination.
- You will either lie on your side on a stretcher or you will lie on your back with your feet in special supports.
- A local anesthetic will help to “freeze” the prostate, but not put you “to sleep.”
- The ultrasound probe will go through the anus into your rectum.

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### Ultrasound examination of the prostate through the rectum



- This probe shows the prostate and helps with the biopsy. (See diagram: *Ultrasound examination of the prostate through the rectum*)
- The entire examination takes about 15 minutes.
  - You may leave once it is done.
  - You may need someone to take you home.

### Biopsy

- **Biopsies** take tissue samples from the prostate.
  - A microscope is used to look at the tissue for possible prostate cancer.

### What do I need to do before I have a biopsy?

- Patients who take blood thinners, anti-inflammatory medications, or many herbal supplements:
  - have a higher risk of bleeding
  - usually need to stop taking these drugs before having a biopsy
- Most doctors recommend that you avoid **aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications** for one week before having your biopsy. Please confirm with your urologist for guidance specific to your situation.
- If you are taking bloodthinners such as warfarin (Coumadin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), or dabigatran (Pradax®), **you must ask your urologist for specific instructions about what to do.**
- You will get a prescription for antibiotics before your prostate biopsy.
  - They are used to prevent infection.
  - Take all of the pills as directed.
  - Getting an infection may still happen even if they are taken properly.
- You may need an enema to clean out your bowels before the biopsy.

### What happens during a biopsy?

- A spring-loaded tool passes a thin needle into the prostate through the lining of the rectum. (See diagram: *Ultrasound examination of the prostate through the rectum*)
- These biopsies may also be done by passing the needle through the perineum (the space between the scrotum and anus) instead of going through the lining of the rectum.
- Biopsies that go through the perineum may not be available at all centers.
- You should not feel a lot of pain even though you will be awake during the biopsy.
- Usually, many biopsies are taken from different places inside the prostate to sample the whole prostate.
- Some patients may have had special images of their prostate taken with an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging scan) prior to the biopsy.
- If the MRI showed abnormal areas in the prostate, biopsy needles will be aimed at those abnormal areas.
- Your doctor should get the biopsy report within a few weeks.

### What might I expect after having a biopsy?

- You may see a bit of blood in your urine and stool for a day or two after a prostate biopsy.
- You may also see blood in your semen for several weeks.
- Contact your doctor if you continue to feel burning when you urinate or if you have trouble urinating.
- **Get medical attention immediately if you develop a high fever or chills.**

### When should I follow up with my urologist?

- Please meet with your urologist \_\_\_\_\_week(s) after your prostate ultrasound and biopsies to discuss the results in person.
- If you still don't have an ultrasound appointment within two weeks, please get in touch with your urologist.

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## Your prostate examination has been scheduled for:

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does your prostate  
worry you?

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