



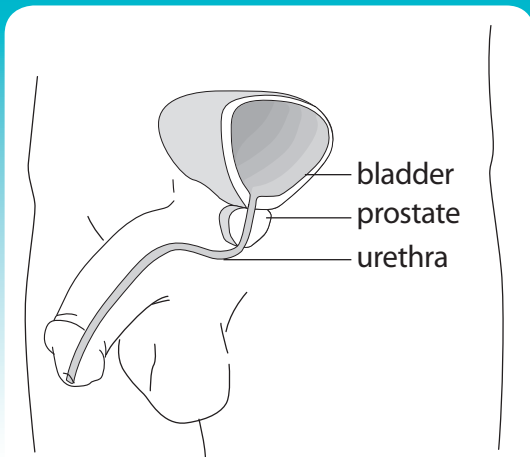
# Prostate ultrasound and biopsies

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 **(DRE)** **OR**
  - A blood test showing a high level of **PSA**.
- PSA (prostate-specific antigen) 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:
  - A problem with the prostate (such as being larger than normal) **OR**
  - An infection

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

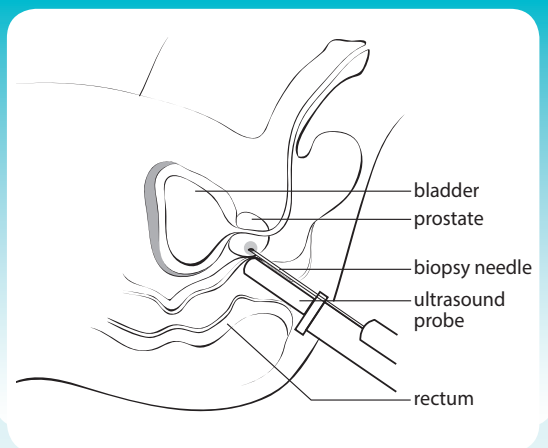
### Ultrasound

- **Transrectal ultrasound (TRUS)** examination which 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.

## What happens during an ultrasound examination?

- A urologist or ultrasound specialist 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.

### 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 **OR**
  - 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.
- If you are taking the blood-thinners 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 locations.
- 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 scan (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.

## Your prostate examination has been scheduled for:

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

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

*This publication is produced by*

Canadian **U**rological Association  
*The Voice of Urology in **Canada***



Association des **U**rologues du Canada  
*La voix de l'urologie au **Canada***

The information in the publication is not intended to convey medical advice or to substitute for direct consultation with a qualified medical practitioner. The Canadian Urological Association disclaims all liability and legal responsibility howsoever caused, including negligence, for the information contained in or referenced by this brochure.

© 2023. Canadian Urological Association. All rights reserved.

[cua.org](http://cua.org)