

Leader Talking Points: Prostate Cancer

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men (after skin cancer), but it can often be treated successfully.
- Prostate cancer begins when cells in the prostate gland start to grow out of control. The prostate is a gland found only in males.
- Prostate cancer is more likely to develop in older men and in non-Hispanic Black men.
- About 6 cases in 10 are diagnosed in men who are 65 or older, and it is rare in men under 40. The average age of men at diagnosis is about 66.
- Prostate cancer can be a serious disease, but most men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not die from it.
- Prostate cancer can often be found early by testing for prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels in a man's blood. Another way to find prostate cancer is a digital rectal exam (DRE). If the results of either of these tests is abnormal, further testing (such as a prostate biopsy) is often done to determine if a man has cancer.
- If prostate cancer is found because of screening, it's more likely to be at an earlier, more treatable stage than if no screening were done.
- Neither the PSA test nor the DRE is 100% accurate. These tests can sometimes have abnormal results even when a man does not have cancer (known as a false-positive result), or normal results even when a man does have cancer (known as a false-negative result).
- Finding and treating all prostate cancers early might seem to make sense, but some prostate cancers grow so slowly that they would never cause a man problems during his lifetime. Because of screening, some men may be diagnosed with a prostate cancer that they would have never known about otherwise; it would never have led to their death, or even caused any symptoms.
- The question of screening for prostate cancer is personal and complex one; check your healthcare coverage and discuss your personal risks and potential benefits with your healthcare provider to determine if PSA or DRE screening are right for you.