

PSA testing: when should you start?

A quick guide for Australian men based on the 2026 national guidelines

1. Know your risk

HIGHER RISK

You may be at least twice the usual risk if you have:

- a brother with prostate cancer
- a father diagnosed before age 65
- 2+ second-degree relatives who died from prostate cancer
- Black sub-Saharan ancestry
- a BRCA2 mutation

IF YOU ARE AT HIGHER RISK

Start testing every 2 years from 45.
Age 45–49: action level ≥ 1.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Age 50–69: action level ≥ 2.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Age 70+: action level ≥ 5.5 $\mu\text{g/L}$
At/above: repeat in 1–3 months; if confirmed, consider referral.

2. Discuss the possible benefits and harms with your GP before deciding to test

You can choose to test, opt out, or opt back in. These pathways apply if you choose testing.

3. Follow the pathway for your age

AGE 45–49

NOT AT HIGHER RISK

Routine testing is not recommended. If interested in your prostate health, an initial test may be offered.

INITIAL PSA TEST

PSA < 1.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$

No further testing until age 50.

PSA ≥ 1.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$

Repeat in 1–3 months. If confirmed, consider referral.

AGE 50–69

STANDARD PATHWAY

If you decide to test after an informed discussion:

PSA TEST EVERY 2 YEARS

PSA < 3.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$

Continue testing every 2 years.

PSA ≥ 3.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$

Repeat in 1–3 months. If confirmed, offer referral.

AGE 70+

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

Consider life expectancy, other health conditions, values and preferences. Test only if life expectancy is over 7 years.

PSA TEST EVERY 2 YEARS

PSA < 5.5 $\mu\text{g/L}$

Further PSA testing may be discontinued.

PSA ≥ 5.5 $\mu\text{g/L}$

Repeat in 1–3 months. If confirmed, consider referral.

What happens next if your PSA stays high?

1

A repeat test confirms it. Your PSA is still at or above the action level for your age.



2

You are referred. Your GP talks with you about seeing a specialist for further checks.



3

You have a scan first. An MRI of the prostate (mpMRI) is recommended before any biopsy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men: the same age, risk and PSA recommendations apply.

Your GP can tailor the discussion to your individual circumstances and preferences.

IMPORTANT This summary is for general information and does not replace medical advice. PSA levels are measured in $\mu\text{g/L}$. Recommendations apply to people with a prostate. Testing is generally offered only where life expectancy is greater than 7 years.