MarketWatch

The prostate-cancer screening rules just changed. Here's when men should get tested.

The American Cancer Society now recommends most men get their first PSA test when they turn 50. Black men and other men considered high risk should start screening at age 45.

By Jaimy Lee

Updated Nov. 13, 2026, 7:37 a.m. ET



The American Cancer Society now recommends that most men start getting screened for prostate cancer starting at 50. Black men and those who have a family history should start screening at 45 years old.

Photo: Getty Images

Most men should start getting tested for prostate cancer at age 50 in a major change to how men are screened for the common cancer.

The American Cancer Society now recommends that men of average risk get their first PSA test when they turn 50 years old and are then tested every two years. A prostate-

specific antigen (PSA) test is a simple blood test that measures PSA levels; if someone has elevated PSA levels, that can indicate the possibility of prostate cancer.

"For years, the ACS largely focused on encouraging men to discuss the pros and cons of PSA screening with their doctors," said Mark Ashamalla, a radiation oncologist at the Episcopal Health Services hospital system in New York, in an email. "Now they're taking a much clearer position and actually recommending regular screening."

Since 2010, when the American Cancer Society last issued guidelines for prostate-cancer screening, the organization has emphasized that patients should talk with their doctors about whether and when to take a PSA test. This is called "shared decision-making."

Since then, however, the treatments for prostate cancer have improved and more favorable research about PSA tests has emerged, creating an opening for the American Cancer Society to rethink how men should be screened for this kind of cancer. PSA tests likely reduce deaths from prostate cancer, with few or no adverse events, according to a rigorous review of other research that was published last spring.

"Accumulating evidence has confirmed that screening reduces prostate-cancer mortality and distant-stage disease," the ACS researchers wrote in a study published Thursday.

Prostate cancer is common, affecting 13% of men in the U.S. at some point in their lives, and is the second-leading cause of cancer death in men in the U.S., according to the ACS. The average age of diagnosis is about 68 years old. Former President Joe Biden is currently being treated for advanced prostate cancer — "I know firsthand the toll of this disease, and I know that catching it early saves lives," he wrote Thursday on X —and several notable public figures like the actor Robert De Niro and Warren Buffett have been diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer.

There are several long-running medical studies that enrolled thousands of men that have informed how medical organizations think about PSA tests, which have become the preferred screening option over rectal exams.

But the American Cancer Society also noted on Thursday that Black men weren't adequately represented in those studies. Black men have a 67% higher chance of developing prostate cancer than white men, in addition to higher mortality rates, likely due to getting diagnosed with more advanced disease.

The organization now says that men who are at high risk, including all Black men and men of any race with a strong family history of prostate cancer, should start getting an annual PSA test at age 45.

The American Cancer Society also said that regular PSA tests should end at age 69, depending on the individual. As men get older, the harms of treatment can outweigh the

benefits. Men between the ages of 70 and 74 should talk with their doctors about whether they need to keep up screening. Regular screening still isn't recommended for anyone once they hit 75 years old.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jaimy Lee

Jaimy Lee is a healthcare editor and reporter for MarketWatch. She is based in New York.