

## **Understanding PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen)**

### **What is PSA?**

PSA stands for Prostate-Specific Antigen. It is a protein produced by cells in the prostate gland, which is a part of the male reproductive system. PSA is commonly measured through a blood test and is used as a marker for various prostate conditions, including prostate cancer.

### **Why is PSA Testing Done?**

PSA testing is primarily performed to screen for prostate cancer or to monitor the progression of prostate conditions such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or prostatitis. It helps detect potential issues early when treatment is most effective.

### **What Do PSA Levels Mean?**

Normal PSA levels vary among individuals and tend to increase with age. Generally, a PSA level below 4 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) is considered normal. However, elevated PSA levels can indicate various conditions, including:

- Prostate Cancer: Higher PSA levels may suggest the presence of prostate cancer, though not all elevated PSA levels indicate cancer.
- Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH): BPH is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, which can elevate PSA levels.
- Prostatitis: Inflammation or infection of the prostate gland can cause temporary increases in PSA levels.

### **Interpreting PSA Results:**

PSA levels should be interpreted in conjunction with other factors, such as age, prostate size, and medical history. A single elevated PSA result does not necessarily indicate prostate cancer. Further diagnostic tests, such as a digital rectal exam (DRE) or prostate biopsy, may be necessary to confirm a diagnosis.

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