

What preparations are needed?

Other than coming with a comfortably full bladder, no tests on the day require any special preparation. You can eat and drink as normal and can take your usual medications. You are welcome to have someone accompany you to the appointment for support.

What could be the next steps?

Following this appointment, you may need to have further tests on another day. These could include:

A repeat PSA – If you have only had one PSA blood test, we will want to repeat this with an interval of around 4 weeks, as sometimes the PSA level can fall, meaning no further action is required.

An MRI scan – An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan will create a detailed picture of your prostate and the immediately surrounding tissues, indicating whether there is likely to be cancer in your prostate. It is less likely to pick up slow growing low grade prostate cancers but these are far less likely to cause any problems in your lifetime. If it does pick up an abnormality then it will help guide a biopsy.

A prostate biopsy – This involves using a fine needle to take some samples of tissue from the prostate, sending them to the pathology lab to be investigated under a microscope for cancer cells. If the MRI scan does not show any signs of cancer then you may not need a biopsy.

CT scan and bone scan - If you have a very high PSA (for example in the hundreds or above) you may have prostate cancer that has spread outside the prostate. If this has happened, you do not always need an MRI or biopsy. Instead we would recommend having a CT or bone scan to see where/if the cancer has spread.

If you require any of these additional investigations, we will arrange these and aim to send you home with the future appointment dates along with an appointment to get the results (either telephone or face-to-face). Not everyone will need further investigation and sometimes we can simply discharge you back to the care of your GP with advice.

If we diagnose prostate cancer, then we will look at your test results with our wider team of health professionals, the multi-disciplinary team (MDT), and then discuss with you about the next steps. Treatment options vary a lot and will depend on the type and stage of your cancer.

Further information

If you require any further information or have any questions, please contact the Urology Nurse Specialist team on: 01271 311877.

Prostate Cancer UK national charity is also a useful source of information and advice: prostatecanceruk.org

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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