



# County of Rockland Department of Health NEWS RELEASE

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## **County Department of Health Announces Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**

Pomona, NY – September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a perfect time to talk with your doctor and make an informed decision about whether or not you should get screened for prostate cancer.

Screening (looking for signs of the disease in those without symptoms) can help find many prostate cancers early, but often can't tell how dangerous the cancer is. Some prostate cancers can be a serious threat to health, while others grow slowly and never become a serious threat to health or affect how long a man lives. They may still be treated, either because the doctor can't be sure how fast growing and fast spreading the cancer might be, or because a man is uncomfortable not having any treatment. Treatment can have side effects that seriously affect a man's quality of life, which for some men may be minor and/or short-term, but for others can be severe and long-lasting, or even permanent.

“At this time, there is not enough scientific evidence to show that the potential benefits of prostate cancer screening outweigh the known side effects of treatment, so it is important to discuss the uncertainties, risks, and potential benefits of prostate cancer screening with your health care provider before you make your decision,” said Dr. Joan H. Facelle, Rockland County Commissioner of Health.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that you have this discussion with your health care provider:

- at age 50 if you are at average risk of prostate cancer and are expected to live at least 10 more years.
- at age 45 if you are at high risk of developing prostate cancer (includes African Americans and men who have a first-degree relative (father, brother, or son) diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age (younger than age 65).
- at age 40 if you are at even higher risk (have several first-degree relatives who had prostate cancer at an early age).

After this discussion, if you want to be screened, you should be tested with the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. The digital rectal exam (DRE) may also be done as a part of screening. Even after a decision about testing has been made, the discussion about the benefits and risks of screening should be repeated as new information about the benefits and risks of testing becomes available, and if there are changes in your health, values, and preferences.

For more information call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

The Rockland County Cancer Institute, of the Rockland County Department of Health, provides education about reducing your risk and early detection of cancer, and referrals to cancer related services. For more information or to schedule a program call (845) 364-3857 or visit our website [www.RocklandCancerInfo.com](http://www.RocklandCancerInfo.com).

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