



**THE UROLOGY CENTER
OF COLORADO**

Addressing the Prostate Cancer Screening Controversy

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In October 2011, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force issued a new recommendation stating that healthy men of all ages should no longer be screened for prostate cancer through the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. This recommendation is something that should be discussed with trepidation. More than 3,000 men in Colorado will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the state. The majority of these men will be diagnosed through a PSA test.

There are often no early signs or symptoms of prostate cancer. Since the advent of the PSA test in the 1980s the mortality rate per 100,000 men diagnosed with prostate cancer has actually declined by almost 40 percent. While more cases of prostate cancer are now being diagnosed, urologists are diagnosing them at earlier stages through PSA screening. That improves overall prognoses and treatment options.

Not all prostate cancer diagnoses are life threatening. Not all prostate cancer diagnoses require treatment. But, the PSA test is the best option available today to help men assess their risk for prostate cancer and then determine the appropriate treatment with their physician. Discounting prostate cancer screening entirely will undo the significant progress we've made in diagnosing and treating this potentially devastating disease. TUCC physicians recommend that all men start being screened for prostate cancer by having a baseline PSA at age 40. African American men or men with a positive family history of the disease should have a baseline screening at age 35. Men should discuss the results of their first screening and whether they need to continue to be screened for prostate cancer on an annual basis with their physician.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force took questions and comments on the prostate cancer screening recommendation until November 8th. Once finalized, the new recommendation statement will reflect any changes made based on the public comments and be posted online.