

① Run Like Hal's Prostate Cancer Info Flyer & personal cancer story

PSA stands for "Prostate Specific Antigen". It is often used as a screening method to try to detect the presence of prostate cancer early. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. A "**digital rectal exam**" (DRE) is a fancy way to say letting someone poke their finger up your rear end. *(Yikes!)* It ain't much fun, and it isn't very dignified. So what good will this stuff do it and why bother especially if you have no cancer warning signs? I didn't know this stuff and I sure wish I had. Please read this and hopefully learn from my mistakes. - Hal

Prostate cancer - POSSIBLE symptoms: *1

- 1) A need / urge to urinate frequently, especially at night
(This symptom may only last for a month or two, then it can go away. That was the case with me - and it was during the day.)
- 2) Difficulty starting or holding back urination
- 3) Weak, dribbling, or interrupted flow of urine
- 4) Painful or burning urination
- 5) Difficulty in having an erection
- 6) Painful ejaculation
- 7) Blood in the urine or semen
- 8) A decrease in the amount of fluid ejaculated
- 9) Pressure or pain in the rectum
- 10) Pain or stiffness in lower back, hips, pelvis, or thighs

~30,000 men die *2 from prostate cancer in the U.S. every year

(Please don't join that club.)

1-3 are also symptoms of "benign prostatic hyperplasia" (BPH), or "enlarged prostate" which is not cancer.

Sometimes PSA is low & no symptoms occur, in that case **a DRE may be the ONLY warning of trouble you'll get.**
(That was the case with me. I wish I could go back in time. I can't)

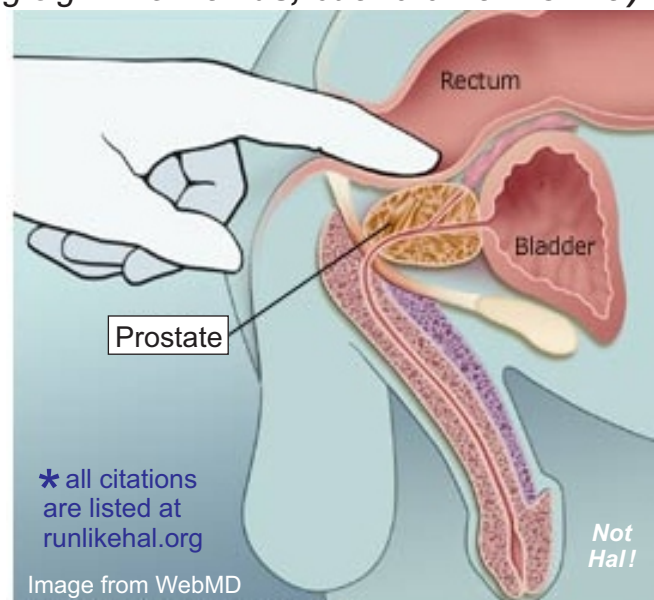
Hal was diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer (S4) at an ER visit in August of 2018 due to severe hip pain. It was from a bone tumor and it was bad news. It was also the same week he was retiring from Ford after working there for 33 years as an engineer. He was getting DRE's and PSA tests but he didn't know many of the basics that are explained here. If he had, his cancer could've been caught sooner. (Hal is retired and lives in Ypsilanti Michigan.)

*Here is what your doctor should tell you that a digital prostate exam might find: *3*

- 1) **If your prostate is enlarged.** This is subjective and may not mean cancer but if it is enlarged, you might be at higher risk or be in for other urinary problems. (BPH)
- 2) **If your prostate feels consistent in size, density and texture. (no bumps!)** A healthy prostate generally should be uniform, and not misshapen or bumpy. **Bumps** could mean there is more aggressive cancer growing inside your prostate. *(My prostate had a bump but I wasn't entirely clear that this was a key warning sign. Well it was, but I didn't know it!)*

image of a digital prostate exam >

(Only a portion of the prostate can be checked this way, but it is still a good indicator of general prostate health. I'd say to get a DRE at 50, & every 2-3 years after that if you have no issues.)



* all citations are listed at runlikehal.org

PSA "safe level" chart (ng/mL) **You can have a low PSA & cancer! (I did.)**

Age (yrs)	Caucasian	African American	Asian American	
40 - 49	0 - 2.5	0 - 2.5	0 - 2.0	
50 - 59	0 - 3.5	0 - 4.0	0 - 3.0	*4
60 - 69	0 - 4.5	0 - 4.5	0 - 4.0	
70 - 79	0 - 5.5	0 - 5.5	0 - 5.0	

Some use **4.0** for all men of all ages. *(They shouldn't!!)*

A word about PSA testing: There has been a lot of push back on prostate cancer screening lately for good reasons, as unnecessary surgeries can cause damaging side effects. PSA values can vary and low PSA levels may not mean you are safe, and higher levels may not mean you are in danger if you are older, but a huge PSA level means trouble, *(mine was over 50)* & a jump of 0.65 - 0.70*5 is a warning sign. *(Mine jumped from 2.2 to 3.6 in 2 yrs.) I say check it!*