

Watch and Wait for Prostate Cancer

Patient Information – Urology Service

Now that you are on watch and wait for your prostate cancer, here are some further details about what will happen and when.

Watch and wait (or watchful waiting) is a method of observing your prostate cancer through blood tests only. These tests measure the amount of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in your blood. PSA is a protein produced by the prostate. It is a simple way to keep track of your cancer.

Who can have watch and wait?

- Patients who have had treatment (radical prostatectomy, radiation or hormone treatment).
- Patients on active surveillance who are of an age when repeat biopsies are no longer required.
- Patients who were first diagnosed with prostate cancer after the age of 75 years old.

Watch and wait timeframe and testing

Initially you will be followed up in clinic, perhaps every three, six or twelve months as decided by your urologist. Once your condition is stable enough to only require follow-up once a year, you will be referred to the Urology Cancer Follow-up Coordinator. Your next follow-up (review) date is set at one year from the decision to refer you, e.g. 4th June referred to database, your next follow up will be 4th June each year after.

About six weeks before your review date you will receive a blood test form in the mail. The accompanying letter will give you instructions on getting the blood test done. The results of these tests will be checked and a letter sent to you explaining the outcome.

If the tests are normal we will continue to check your cancer status annually in this manner. Only if there is anything of concern in the results will a letter and an appointment to see your consultant occur. The goal of watchful waiting is to continue monitoring your cancer and ensure your condition remains stable without the burden of attending outpatient clinics.

If you are also receiving follow-up by the Coordinator for another cancer, your follow-ups will be combined so as to occur only once a year.

Seen in clinic

You will be brought back to clinic if your PSA is above the limit set by your Urologist.

Leaving watch and wait

You may stop watch and wait at any time by informing your consultant at clinic or by contacting the Urology Cancer Follow-up Coordinator at any time on (03) 364 0640, extension 88700.

Contact information

For more information about:

- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz
- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz