
What is active monitoring?

Active monitoring involves regular monitoring of your PSA blood test and regular prostate examinations. It is not about doing nothing and forgetting about you. This may be a difficult decision to make and needs to be based upon all of your test results and the decision you make after discussion with your doctor.

From time to time further prostate biopsies may be requested. This is to make sure your prostate cancer has not become more aggressive or increased in volume.

Why would I be offered active monitoring instead of treatment?

Your results suggest that the cancer is unlikely to cause you major problems in the future and therefore it may be better to avoid active medical/surgical treatment and the side effects that such treatments can cause. For many men the chances of dying from something else are far greater than dying from prostate cancer itself. This applies especially to older men who may have a cancer that is growing at a slow rate. Active monitoring is unlikely to have any affect on how long you live, but it will allow you to maintain your quality of life.

What are the benefits of active monitoring?

Lack of treatment related side-effects such as impotence, incontinence. No loss of time from your work or hobbies.

Are there any risks?

PSA tests and prostate examinations are not fool proof and sometimes the cancer may spread quickly and unpredictably and cause local symptoms such as urine retention. It is therefore important that you attend your appointments in order that we can monitor any changes early.

If this happens can anything be done?

Even if this was to happen the cancer should still respond to hormone treatment. This will not cure you of cancer but may help to control the growth of the cancer for several years.

Summary

Active monitoring is the process of observing your disease carefully and intervening when appropriate. In other words treatment is avoided until you have symptoms or there are other indications such as a raised PSA. You may feel you would like treatment in order to try to cure your cancer, you should read the radical radiotherapy and radical prostatectomy leaflets and discuss your treatment options with your doctor before coming to a decision. Remember, active monitoring is not appropriate for all men, the same being true of radical treatments for prostate cancer.

If you have any questions or concerns, please find below contact numbers for the Urology wards and Urology nurses:-

Urology Wards

D 5 West on:- 01633 – 234040 / 234041 (24 hours)

Urology Outpatient Department on:-

Tel. No:- 01633 – 234979

Monday – Friday office hours

Janet Marty, Uro-oncology Nurse Specialist on:-

Tel. No:- 01633 – 656143

Monday – Friday office hours

Julie Simpson, Uro-oncology Nurse Specialist on:-

Tel. No:- 01633 – 238976

Monday – Friday office hours

Sian Lewis, Urology Nurse Specialist:-

Tel. No:- 01633 – 234533

Monday – Friday office hours

References:- Tanagho E A McAninch J W 2003. Smith General Urology

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**