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## A New Approach to Prostate Health for the Man in Your Life

By [Aaron Katz, MD](#) Chairman, Department of Urology Winthrop University Hospital, Long Island, NY Author of [The Definitive Guide to Prostate Cancer](#)

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According to [the most recent estimates](#), more than 241,000 men will have been diagnosed with prostate cancer in the United States this year (2012), while more than 28,000 will die from the disease. Overall, prostate cancer ranks only behind lung cancer as the deadliest among males in the US.

Until recently, the gold standard for helping to screen for prostate cancer was the [PSA test](#), which looks for a biological marker – the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA – to determine one’s risk for developing the disease. But earlier this year, [a federal panel called the PSA test “unnecessary”](#) and told men to skip the test altogether. Making things worse, many men believe that once diagnosed with prostate cancer, the next step is to undergo invasive surgery to remove it – something that, it turns out, is extreme and unnecessary.

With respect to the last point, surgery and even radiation treatment are no longer the “automatic” choice. An approach called “watchful waiting” – in which a patient diagnosed with low-grade prostate cancer is monitored every three months or so by a physician – is now being practiced with increasing frequency.

This approach is part of an overall spectrum of care called **active holistic surveillance**. Simply, it espouses PSA testing – which, while admittedly imperfect, is the only screening tool currently available for prostate cancer – while entailing the adoption of a far healthier lifestyle: reducing stress levels during the day, altering diets to include more healthful choices, and taking up immunotherapies such as [active hexose correlated compound \(AHCC\)](#) to help boost the body’s natural defenses.

There are other steps to take as part of this approach to care:

- Consume pomegranate and broccoli seed extracts, green tea, herbs to reduce inflammation
- Adopt a diet that is rich in soy and low on fats and sugars
- Men should eat a more plant-based diet, and add [cruciferous vegetables](#) like kale, cauliflower and broccoli
- Get a PSA test every 3-4 months for the first two years after a prostate cancer diagnosis, as well as a prostate MRI, “which can tell us a lot about the cancer within the prostate”

Quite simply, active holistic surveillance empowers patients to take their health into their own hands. In a time when there are mixed messages surrounding prostate cancer, from PSA tests to surgeries to post-diagnostic care, this approach – a true collaboration between patient and doctor, not to mention the spouses and families of those patients – is more important than ever.

There are two things that are not in doubt when it comes to active holistic surveillance: First, it is an evidence-based, scientific approach. While eating healthy and exercising has long been associated with overall health and wellness, recent studies have shown this course to be effective in the fight against certain cancers. As the efficacy of active holistic surveillance becomes more widely known, I hope that the number of physicians who adopt it as a course of treatment will continue to increase.

Second: The role of the patient's spouse, significant other, and family has never been more important. I've observed over the years that when men come in to discuss a life-changing diagnosis with me, it is their wife, girlfriend or partner who is taking notes on what the next steps are. *They* are the ones who will most help these men stick to their new diets, who will encourage them to go for a jog or a walk, and who will remind their husband or boyfriend to go back and get another PSA test. And guess what? Most of the time, it works!

Again, active holistic surveillance is still a relatively new concept. So new that your doctor probably hasn't heard of it. I strongly suggest reading this [recent article](#) from the *New York Times* and sharing it with your physician to see if it's the right approach for your man.

It could one day save his life.

[Read more about the importance of the PSA test.](#)

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