What is PSA?
PSA or Prostate Specific Antigen is a protein produced by the prostate gland and most of it is added to the semen. Small amounts of PSA go into the bloodstream. The amount of PSA in the bloodstream can be measured using a simple blood test. Current national guidance is that if you are aged 50 to 69 years and your PSA level is over 3.0ng/ml your GP can refer you for assessment and possible further investigations.

What can cause an elevated PSA level?
The following can cause increased amounts of PSA to enter the bloodstream:

- Age – as men age more PSA passes into the bloodstream because the prostate becomes larger
- Benign prostatic enlargement – often referred to as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)
- Ejaculation or riding a bicycle – may increase the PSA levels for 48-72 hours
- A simple infection of the bladder or prostate
- Inflammation in the prostate – this can be present without causing any symptoms
- After prostate surgery or a prostate biopsy
- In the absence of the conditions mentioned above, a raised PSA level can be an indication of prostate cancer

Why am I being seen in the Elevated PSA Clinic?

- Your GP has made an urgent referral to the Urology Department because you have been found to have an elevated PSA blood test. One in four men with an elevated PSA level will be found to have prostate cancer after additional investigations.
- National guidance is that all men referred urgently with a raised PSA level and subsequently found to have prostate cancer should start treatment if needed within sixty two days of the GP referral. Some men with prostate cancer require monitoring only. This means that hospitals have to perform any required diagnostic tests very quickly.
- The Elevated PSA Clinic is your first step on a rapid diagnostic pathway. Following your appointment in the Elevated PSA Clinic you are likely to undergo several investigations in quick succession. It will be very helpful if you can make yourself available as required for these investigations. This will enable the hospital to start treatment quickly if needed.

How long will I have to wait for an appointment?
Because you have been referred in as a suspected prostate cancer patient your appointment in the Elevated PSA Clinic has to be within seven days of your GP making your referral to the hospital.

Where are the Elevated PSA Clinics held?
Elevated PSA Clinics are held at Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne District General Hospital. You will be appointed to the first available clinic slot in order for your appointment to take place within seven days of your GP referral. Where possible we appoint men to their nearest clinic. However, this is not always possible if we are to meet the seven day first appointment target.
Some men living in the Eastbourne area may have to travel to Conquest Hospital or vice versa in order for the seven day appointment target to be met and subsequent urgent diagnostic tests instigated.

**Who will I see in the Elevated PSA Clinic?**
You will be seen by a Doctor or a Specialist Nurse. A team of outpatient nurses support these clinics and if you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to talk to the team looking after you.

**How long should I expect to be at the hospital?**
Generally you should expect to be at the hospital for around one hour in total. Sometimes unavoidable delays do occur, so occasionally the time at the hospital may be longer.

**Will I have to wait?**
As a specialist service we see a large number of patients so all of our clinics are very busy. Patients are seen in order of their appointment time so arriving early will not mean that you are seen early. To reduce your waiting time, please try to arrive no more than 10 minutes before your appointment. We will keep you informed about waiting times at regular intervals. Please speak to the clinic nurse if you require more information or have any concerns about waiting times.

**What will I need to bring to the clinic?**
Please bring a urine sample with you. You can obtain a sample bottle from your GP. Also bring a list of current medicines (including those prescribed by your GP, medicines you have bought yourself, or alternative medicines, such as herbal remedies).

**Do I need to bring anyone with me?**
You do not have to bring anyone with you to the clinic, but many people find it useful to bring someone along to the consultation.

**What preparation do I require for the Elevated PSA Clinic?**
*Please attend for your appointment with a full bladder* as you will be required to provide a flow test before you are seen by the Doctor or Specialist Nurse. This is a test which measures the rate of your urinary flow. You need to have a full bladder in order to provide an accurate test and will be asked to pass water (urinate) into a special machine.

**What can I expect to happen in the Elevated PSA Clinic?**
Before you are seen by the Doctor or Specialist Nurse, the Clinic Nurse will ask you to complete a short questionnaire about your urinary symptoms. After providing the above flow test you will have an ultrasound scan. An ultrasound scan is a painless test that uses sound waves to show us how well you empty your bladder.

As well as discussing any urinary symptoms with you, the Doctor or Specialist Nurse will take a brief medical history. The clinical examination will include checking your external genitalia and a digital rectal examination (DRE). A gloved, lubricated finger is inserted into your back passage (rectum) to assess the size and consistency of your prostate. After the clinical examination any further tests required will be discussed with you. If further urgent tests are deemed necessary you will be given detailed written information about these tests, as well as dates to attend for these investigations before leaving the clinic. You may require a repeat PSA blood test, and if so, you will be told when and where to have the blood taken and given a PSA blood test form to take away with you.
You will automatically receive a copy of the clinic letter sent to your GP detailing the outcome of the Elevated PSA Clinic appointment unless you tell us that you do not wish to receive a copy of this letter.

**What further urgent investigations may I require?**

- **MRI scan of prostate**: This will be performed at Eastbourne District General Hospital and is likely to take place on the Saturday after your elevated PSA Clinic appointment.

  **MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)**: It is a non-invasive test that uses a powerful magnetic field, radiofrequency pulse and a computer to provide a detailed image of your prostate, pelvic lymph nodes and bones. MRI does not use ionising radiation (X-rays). The scan is reviewed by the Prostate Team and depending on the result of your scan, clinical assessment and PSA level, your further management may be (a) Biopsy of the prostate (b) PSA monitoring or (c) No further investigation.

- **Prostate biopsies**: Prostate biopsies are performed to obtain tissue from the prostate to be checked under a microscope for the presence of cancer. Biopsies are performed at Eastbourne District General Hospital. There are different techniques of prostate biopsy depending your MRI scan findings and these are:

  1. Transrectal ultrasound scan (TRUS) prostate biopsy under local anaesthetic with or without fusion technique. This procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic and takes approximately 20 minutes. It involves passing a small ultrasound probe gently into the rectum. If fusion technique is used then the images from your MRI are superimposed ‘fused’ with the transrectal ultrasound image to target specific lesions and this will be used in selected cases. Samples are then taken from the prostate under ultrasound guidance. These will be checked under microscope for the presence of cancer. The test is a little uncomfortable but not usually painful.

  2. Template prostate biopsy under general anaesthetic. This is a day case procedure, requires a quick general anaesthetic and involves obtaining samples from the prostate by inserting biopsy needles through the perineum, i.e., the skin between the testis and the anus with the guidance of a transrectal ultrasound scan probe. This technique is usually recommended if there is an abnormal area identified on the MRI scan that cannot be accessed via the transrectal approach.

You will be booked for the appropriate biopsy procedure once your case has been discussed by the Prostate Team. If the decision is for PSA monitoring only or no further investigation you will be contacted by a clinician to inform you of your follow-up plan. You will be informed about returning for the biopsy results when your biopsies are taken.

- **Bone scan**: This will be carried out if indicated either at the Conquest or Eastbourne District General Hospital. You will be appointed to the first available slot. The bone scan is a nuclear medicine investigation, involves small amount of radioactive substance called a tracer injected into a vein. The whole scrotum is then scanned to check for areas where too much tracer has been absorbed into the skeleton. Areas where too much tracer has been absorbed may contain cancer cells. Do not be surprised if you receive an appointment for a bone scan. An appointment for a bone scan does not automatically mean that prostate cancer has spread to your bones. It can be very useful test to help us to exclude this possibility.
Some men with an elevated PSA require all of the above investigations, others require some of the above investigations, and some will continue with PSA monitoring alone and not have any of the above investigations.

**Contact us**
If you have any questions about the Elevated PSA Clinic please phone (01323) 417400 (hospital switchboard) and ask for extension 3056 (answerphone facility)

**Sources of further information**

**Important information**
This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

**Your comments**
We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

**Hand hygiene**
The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

**Other formats**
If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: (01424) 755255 Ext: 2620

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

**Reference**
The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Consultant Urologists: - Mr S Ahmed, Mr S Garnett, Mr F Kapasi, Mr P Rimington. Mr P Rouse

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Urology Department

Next review date: May 2019
Responsible clinician/author: Miss Alison Gidlow, Senior Urology Cancer Nurse Specialist