



Return on our May 24 webinar

Active surveillance as a treatment option?

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Summary in 5 points:

As surprising as it may seem, it may be that, following your diagnosis of prostate cancer, your doctor prefers to wait before starting treatment.

1. How to explain this?

Often, prostate cancer grows very slowly and for a long time it may not cause symptoms, spread or be life-threatening. Active surveillance is one way to track your cancer. This aims to monitor cancer and treat it only if necessary.

2. What is active surveillance?

The term active surveillance evokes a notion of inactivity, which is however not the case. On the contrary, it is a dynamic program based on close monitoring of cancer progression including PSA test, digital rectal examination, imaging test and biopsy. Follow-up consists of carrying out examinations at regular intervals, approximately every 3 to 6 months, but this may vary depending on your results.

3. Can I opt for active surveillance?

Active surveillance may be offered to you if few samples are positive following your biopsy, your cancer is low grade (Gleason score of 6) and limited to your prostate, your PSA level is below 10 ng/mL and you have no symptoms. With this approach, the risks of erectile, urinary or intestinal disorders associated with the treatment can be avoided (at least temporarily).

4. Treatment if necessary

If your doctor finds that your cancer is progressing faster than expected or changing grade, then he may recommend active treatment (radical surgery, radiation therapy and/or hormone therapy). About 25% to 30% of men under active surveillance end up in treatment due to signs of cancer progression. The cure rate remains the same as if you had not had active surveillance.

5. What you can feel

It is natural to worry about the likelihood that your cancer may grow and spread faster than expected. Some men may find it too stressful to be actively monitored without receiving active treatment. In such a case, immediate treatment may be a better option. If this concerns you, talk to your doctor.