

Active Surveillance

What is it?

This is a way of monitoring early prostate cancer which has not spread outside the prostate.

The rationale is based on the notion that this type of cancer is slow growing and may not need any treatment ever or for a very long time.

This avoids the side effects of prostate cancer treatment for as long as possible while still being able to cure the cancer if required at any time in the future.

Who is it for?

- Low risk prostate cancer: PSA <10, Gleason score 6, stage T1-2
- Intermediate risk prostate cancer (sometimes): PSA 10-20, Gleason score 7, stage T2b

What does it involve?

This will involve regular review with your prostate cancer surgeon. This may involve one or more of the following:

- Review of your symptoms if any
- Digital rectal examination (DRE)
- PSA
- mpMRI
- Repeat prostate biopsies
- Other tests may be discussed: biomarkers

What are the advantages?

- Avoid treatment related side effects
- Less impact on daily life and quality of life
- Can still have curable treatment when required

What are the disadvantages?

- May need lots of prostate biopsies which may be uncomfortable
- Uncertainty about cancer may cause anxiety
- Cancer may grow more quickly than expected resulting in missed opportunity for cure
- Your general health may deteriorate resulting in you not being able to have curable treatment

Will I need treatment in the future?

This is difficult to answer exactly but it is possible that you will need future treatment. This will depend on your general health and how your cancer behaves in the future. In addition, you may decide that you would prefer to have your cancer definitively treated even if it has not shown any signs of growing.