



# Managing Anxiety While on Active Surveillance for Prostate Cancer

## What is Active Surveillance?

- Active surveillance (AS) is one way to treat prostate cancer. It involves regular testing (PSA, imaging, and/or prostate biopsies) to check your prostate cancer for changes
- AS avoids or delays treatment and its side effects, like problems with urinary function, erectile function, bowel function, or hormonal function
- AS is very safe



## Is it Normal to Feel Anxious After Choosing AS?

- Men experience various emotions after choosing AS. Some have stress around regular testing, fear of cancer progressing, or dying

## Will These Feelings Change Over Time?

- In the first year of AS, it is not unusual to feel anxious, nervous, or stressed
- With time, many men learn more about the disease and find ways to deal with their stress
- Most patients report significantly lower levels of anxiety within 2 years

## What Can Help Me Cope with Cancer Related Anxiety?

### Resources and Support Groups

- Talk with your doctor (urologist or primary care doctor) about what support groups may be best for you and your loved ones. Here are some options:
  - Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) Support Groups (includes groups for caregivers)  
<https://www.pcf.org/>
  - Active Surveillance Patients International (ASPI) virtual support groups  
<https://aspatients.org/>
  - Answer Cancer Foundation (AnCan) virtual support groups  
<https://ancan.org/>
- Your doctor can also refer you to a therapist.

### Self-Care Strategies (for patients and caregivers)

- Regular exercise
- Doing activities you enjoy –sports, fishing, spending time in nature, etc.
- Maintaining normal routines
- Spending quality time with loved ones
- Meditation and yoga
- Getting the proper amount of sleep



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## Navigating Scanxiety

- Scanxiety is the stress you may feel around your cancer tests. There are several things you can do to manage scanxiety

### Before Testing:

- Schedule a morning appointment time to limit waiting
- Set time limits for yourself about the worries you have
- Come prepared: bring a favorite snack, read a book, stream a show, or converse with a family member or friend

### During (or before) Testing:

- Use a 4, 7, 8 Breathing Exercise: Inhale slowly for 4 counts, Pause for 7 counts, Exhale for 8 counts
- Distract yourself

### While Waiting for Results:

- Control what you can: plan for when, where, and with whom you will look at your test results
- Self-care and look ahead: schedule an enjoyable activity to look forward to
- Connect with your support system: keep them in the loop

## For Family Members and Friends

- Family members and close friends can also feel anxious about their loved one's prostate cancer diagnosis
- Finding out more can help you feel more confident. These websites could be helpful to learn more about prostate cancer:
  - Prostate Cancer Foundation - PCF.org
  - Urology Care Foundation - urologyhealth.org



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