



HALTON UROLOGY

Dr. Kevin G. Kwan, BSc (Hons), MD, FRCS(C)
Minimally Invasive Surgery and General Urology

Assistant Clinical Professor
Division of Urology, Department of Surgery
McMaster University

Chief of Surgery, Milton District Hospital

Georgetown Hospital • Milton District Hospital • Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital

Suite 205 - 311 Commercial Street • Milton • Ontario • L9T 3Z9 • Tel: (905) 875-3920 • Fax: (905) 875-4340
Email: office@haltonurology.com • Web: www.haltonurology.com

What is active surveillance for prostate cancer?

During active surveillance for prostate cancer, your prostate cancer is closely monitored for any changes or for any evidence of disease progression. Active surveillance for prostate cancer is sometimes called expectant management or watchful waiting.

No cancer treatment is provided during active surveillance for prostate cancer. This means medications, radiation and surgery aren't used. Periodic tests are done to check for signs the cancer is growing such as repeating the PSA, repeat prostate biopsies, prostate MRI.

You might consider active surveillance for prostate cancer if your cancer is small, expected to grow very slowly, confined to one area of your prostate, and isn't causing signs or symptoms. If you have other health problems that limit your life expectancy, active surveillance for prostate cancer may also be a reasonable approach.

Active surveillance for prostate cancer is used to avoid treatment side effects in men with a very low risk of prostate cancer progression. Because prostate cancer generally grows very slowly, men who are diagnosed when the cancer is very small may never have signs and symptoms of the disease. Many may live out their normal life spans before the cancer ever grows large enough to require treatment.

Active surveillance for prostate cancer may be appropriate for you if:

- **Your cancer is small.** If your cancer is found early, while it's still small and limited to one area of your prostate, active surveillance may be a reasonable choice.
- **Your Gleason score is low.** Active surveillance may be best suited for men with a low Gleason score (usually 6 or lower), which indicates a less aggressive, slower growing (indolent) form of cancer.
- **You have other serious health problems.** If you have other advanced health problems, such as severe heart disease, that limit your life expectancy and that could potentially be made worse by treatment of prostate cancer, you may opt for active surveillance.

Risks of active surveillance for prostate cancer include:

- **Anxiety:** you may be anxious and have a sense of uncertainty about the status of your cancer.
- **Frequent medical appointments:** men who choose active surveillance must be willing to meet with their urologist every few months.
- **Cancer growth:** the cancer can grow and spread while you wait. If cancer spreads, you may miss the window of opportunity for effective treatment.

- **Fewer treatment options:** if your cancer spreads, you may have fewer options for treatment. Your treatment options may be more drastic than treatments used for very small cancers.