

Let Arnie Tell You

The logo for 'Turf' features the word in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for 'Tree Services' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf icon is placed above the 'e' in 'Services'. Below the main text is the tagline 'Taking Tree Care to New Heights' in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for 'DesignBuild' features the word 'Design' in black and 'Build' in orange, both in a bold, sans-serif font. A small orange square icon is placed above the 'i' in 'Design'.The logo for 'PLOW' is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

What is it about us men that keeps us away from doctors and allows us to blithely put off routine medical procedures that could keep us alive long enough to see our grandchildren grow up? If we deny we have a health problem it will go away, right?

Not for me. Not anymore.



“Yes, we received your latest PSA results and the doctor wants to see you soon,” says the pleasant female voice over the telephone in answer to my question. PSA is an acronym for “prostate specific antigen,” a protein produced by the male prostate gland. The higher the PSA, the greater the risk for prostate cancer.

My readings have been in the gray area and rising these past few years.

“Can you share with me what they are?” I ask, hoping that the number hasn’t risen significantly, which would likely signal yet another biopsy. It’s hardly a fun procedure and, of course, only a biopsy can reveal the presence of cancer.

“Unfortunately, I can’t tell you your PSA results because I don’t have them available,” she replies. “I’m sure the doctor will inform you at your appointment.”

Why am I sharing this with you?

I’m doing it because I’m assuming that most of you reading this are males, perhaps like me, men of a certain age. And, like me, you’re mortal, although that realization may not occur to you very often as busy as you are. That’s the point of this story. It’s foolish to be so busy you don’t have the time (or the good sense) to get regular checkups.

Several weeks ago, I drove across northern Ohio with Larry Aylward, a colleague and also editor-in-chief of Superintendent magazine, to chat with golfer Arnold Palmer. We met Palmer, one of the greatest players in the history of professional golf, in his memento-cluttered office just days before his 82nd birthday. Palmer conversed with us from his office, located just across the street (Arnold Palmer Drive) from the impeccably manicured Latrobe Country Club in Pennsylvania. He spoke candidly about his health issues, including undergoing radical surgery at the Mayo Clinic in 1997 to remove his cancerous prostate.

About 200,000 new cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed annually. It claims more than 40,000 men each year, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Palmer began getting annual PSA screenings long before the cancerous cells turned up. From year to year he and his doctor watched as his PSA numbers rose. Then, one day, when he was 69, he got the news – “We found cancer.”

As Palmer explained it, he felt he had no choice but to undergo radical prostate surgery. Besides being a great golfer and businessman, he’s no fool when it comes to his health. He has grandchildren he cherishes. In fact, he proudly showed us the head of a driver his grandson recently demolished with a mighty swing.

Palmer acknowledged that prostate cancer isn’t the only health issue he’s faced over the years, just the most threatening.

As a youth working on the Latrobe golf course and later, playing thousands of rounds of golf, he acquired more than a few noncancerous skin lesions that had to be surgically removed. Like you, he spent many days outdoors, soaking up ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Fortunately, he’s avoided melanoma, the most dangerous and often lethal form of skin cancer. Can all of us be as lucky?

Skin cancer, an occupational hazard for anyone working outdoors, can be just as lethal as prostate cancer. More than 68,000 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed in the United States annually. It kills about 9,000 men and women each year.

The number of people suffering from or dying from prostate or skin cancer are just statistics for most of us. They represent other people. As men, we feel strong. We run our businesses. We do our jobs. We expect to continue doing these things tomorrow, the next day and the day after that.

And we will, or, at least, have a better opportunity to do just that if we maintain our health, including getting regular checkups for health risks unique to men, especially men of a certain age.

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