



Tomorrow's News

Volume 3 Issue 1

February 2003

The Tomorrow Project® — Albertans Studying the Connection Between Lifestyle and Cancer

Happy Third Birthday to The Tomorrow Project



The Tomorrow Project is celebrating three successful years. The goals of this phase were to find out if a wide range of Albertans would take part in a long-term study of cancer causes and prevention, whether people who joined the study would provide information about their health, lifestyle, diet and physical activity and whether they would give a blood sample.

Will Albertans agree to take part? Almost 12,000 people have enrolled in the study, representing over 500 communities from every corner of the province. This level of voluntary participation shows an outstanding commitment by Albertans.

Will participants complete three questionnaires? Everyone enrolled in the study completed the first questionnaire and over 85% completed the second questionnaires. Participants tell us that the diet questionnaire takes longer to do and that the physical activity questionnaire is more difficult to complete than the others. This advice is already being used to simplify



and improve the surveys for future participants.

Will participants provide a blood sample? About 1150 people from the Calgary and Red Deer areas were asked for a blood sample. Despite the winter weather and waiting times at their local labs, over 65% of people responded.

What does the future hold for *The Tomorrow Project*? A plan for the next three years includes increasing the number of participants in the study and conducting another survey of those who are presently

in the study. As well, cancer researchers in other provinces are thinking about building similar groups in order to create a large national cohort in the future. Alberta participants can be proud that they led the way.

Thanks to all of you, the first three years have been an incredible success.



Prostate Cancer and PSA Testing

Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer found in Canadian men today. Generally, it affects men over age 50. Some men are more likely to get prostate cancer. Risk factors include a high fat diet, family history of the disease and African-American ancestry.

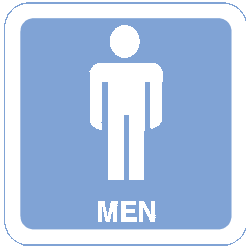
There are two common ways of detecting prostate cancer. One is a digital rectal examination and the other is the PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test of the blood. PSA is a protein produced by the prostate gland and is present in the blood of all men. An elevated level of PSA indicates there are changes in the prostate gland. The changes may be from infection in the prostate gland, some other disease of the gland or prostate cancer. PSA testing is controversial because although we know it can find prostate cancer earlier, we don't know if it increases the chance of being cured. For example, 2 out of 3 men with high PSA will not have cancer. On the other hand, some

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Prostate Cancer

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men with normal PSA levels will actually have cancer. There are many reasons why men choose to be tested or



not to be tested. There are also many uncertainties. Talk to your doctor; learn as much as you can; understand the facts. Then you can make an informed choice that is best for you.

Source: *Prostate Cancer* published by the Alberta Clinical Practice Guidelines Program, Alberta Medical Association. For a copy of the pamphlet call 780-482-2626 or email AMA_CPG@albertadoctors.org

Why would you choose to have a PSA test?

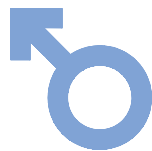
- Despite the limitations, it is currently the best available test for detecting prostate cancer.
- It can detect cancer years before it causes symptoms.
- Early treatment may help you live longer.
- A test result that indicates a normal PSA level may reduce fears and worries.

Why would you choose not to have a PSA test?

- There is no proof that PSA testing improves your chances of being cured of prostate cancer.
- Even if you have a slightly elevated PSA you will need further testing which may cause anxiety and discomfort.
- High PSA does not always mean you have cancer.
- Low PSA does not always mean you are free of cancer.

4780 men aged 35-69 in The Tomorrow Project report on PSA testing

- 47% of men age 50 and over were tested; 11% of men under age 50 were tested
- 26% of rural men and 31% of urban men have been tested
- 50% of tested men had 1 test; 22% had 2 tests; 28% had 3 or more tests



It's Never Too Late!

If you have already returned your second set of questionnaires – thank you. *But if you still have the second set of questionnaires at home, it is not too late to send them back!*

Please Let Us Know If You Move

The scientific strength of a long-term study like *The Tomorrow Project* comes from ongoing participation from everyone who joins the study. One of the main challenges for *The Tomorrow Project* is to keep in touch with participants as people begin to scatter to other parts of Alberta, Canada and the world. Other successful international cohort studies have maintained contact with over 90% of participants over the many years of these studies. We are working hard to achieve the same high level of contact.

Please help us by updating your address, phone number and email if you move. You can continue to take part in the study regardless of where in the world you live. Call the toll-free number from anywhere in Canada, call us collect from outside the country (403-944-2216) or use the website to submit an address change.

When you joined the study, you gave us the names of two people outside your household who would know your new address if you move. If you would like to update your contact information at any time, please call us. We will only use this information after we have exhausted all other ways to reach you.

Finally, we hope you will continue in the study for many years, but it is your right to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you ever decide not to continue, please let us know about your decision so that we can stop sending you questionnaires and newsletters, and so that we do not look for you if you move.

PS: If your address on this newsletter is no longer correct, please take a moment now to call or email with your new address. Thanks!

Contact Us

email: tomorrow@cancerboard.ab.ca
phone: 1.877.919.9292
mail: *The Tomorrow Project*
Alberta Cancer Board
c/o Tom Baker Cancer Centre
1331 - 29 St. NW, Calgary AB T2N 4N2
website: www.thetomorrowproject.org

A research initiative of the Alberta Cancer Board

