

Travel Writer Rick Steves Takes an Unexpected Cancer Journey [VIDEO]

Writer and TV host Rick Steves deals with a prostate cancer diagnosis at UW Medicine and offers hope to others.

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It was supposed to be a routine doctor's appointment.

Well-known travel writer and TV host Rick Steves, 69, was sitting across from his new primary care doctor at [UW Medicine](#) (the University of Washington Medical Center), who suggested a wellness checkup, a few dietary tweaks, maybe tai chi? And how about a blood test?

Steves agreed and didn't think more about it. He went back to work planning a TV shoot about barge trips in Burgundy.

"A few days later, my doctor calls me and asks if there is a quiet place to sit down," Steves remembered. "He then told me my PSAs were off the charts."

Cells in the prostate gland make a protein called prostate-specific antigen, or PSA. A blood test can measure the PSA circulating in the blood, with a high count sometimes indicating prostate cancer. The normal PSA for someone Steves' age is less than 4 nanograms per milliliter, according to his urologic oncologist and surgeon, [Daniel W. Lin, MD](#), a Fred Hutch Cancer Center physician and chief of UW Medicine's urologic oncology program and holder of the Pritt Family Endowed Chair in Prostate Cancer Research.

Steves' PSA level was 55.

"It was like I'd been thrown into a new land fraught with mystery and uncertainty," he wrote in an Oct. 8 post on Facebook. "Suddenly swept away from my general practitioner and into the world of oncology, I needed to make important decisions about things I knew nothing of, and I barely spoke the language."

Read the full story on the [UW Medicine Newsroom](#), and watch a related video at the top of this article or [on YouTube](#).

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