

DIGITAL RECTAL EXAMINATION - DRE

Digital rectal examination

Because the prostate lies up against the bowel or is only millimetres away from the rectum, a doctor can easily feel the prostate by using a gloved finger in the rectum (digital rectal examination or DRE). This examination can tell the doctor if the surface of the prostate is regular or if there are any hard zones which might indicate the presence of a tumour. While the prostate itself has no function in achieving an erection of the penis, as previously mentioned, the nerves needed for an erection adhere to its sidewalls and can be affected by surgical or radiation treatment.

Not all GPs will perform a DRE, some prefer to have this done by a specialist.