

TESTICULAR CANCER AND SELF-EXAM

WHAT IS A TESTICULAR SELF-EXAM?

Testicular Cancer And Self-Exam

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WHO GETS TESTICULAR CANCER?

A testicular self-exam is a way that men can examine themselves to look for signs of cancer of the testicles. The testicles are oval-shaped sex glands in a sac of skin called the scrotum. The scrotum is located behind and below the penis. The testicles produce sperm and the male hormone testosterone.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TESTICULAR CANCER?

WHAT IS TESTICULAR CANCER?

HOW CAN I KNOW IF I HAVE TESTICULAR CANCER?

Cells in the body normally divide (reproduce) only when new cells are needed. Sometimes cells will divide for no reason and without order, creating a mass of tissue called a tumor. Tumors can be benign or malignant. Testicular cancer is a malignant tumor in a testicle.

CAN TESTICULAR CANCER BE CURED?

Cancer cells can break from the tumor and spread to other parts of the body. This spreading is called metastasis. Cancers that have spread are considered to be at a later stage than cancers that have not spread. Later stage cancers require more aggressive treatment.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM TESTICULAR CANCER?

WHO GETS TESTICULAR CANCER?

Testicular cancer happens most often in men between the ages of 20 and 35. Some men who had a physical disorder of the testicles when they were young might have a higher risk. However, cancer of the testicles is rare.

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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TESTICULAR CANCER?

- A lump in either testicle



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- An enlarged (swollen) testicle
- Pain in the testicle
- A dull ache in the lower abdomen or groin
- A sudden gathering of fluid in the scrotum
- Feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- A shrinking testicle

HOW CAN I KNOW IF I HAVE TESTICULAR CANCER?

If you have symptoms of testicular cancer or if you notice any changes in either or both testicles, you should contact your health care provider. Many times, changes in the testicles are not cancer. Your health care provider can find the cause of your symptoms.

During your visit, you will be asked to talk about your symptoms and any illnesses you have had in the past. The health care provider will feel the scrotum for lumps. Samples of blood and urine might be taken for testing. You might also undergo an ultrasound of the scrotum and testicles so your doctor can see if there is a tumor present.

When cancer is thought to be present, the testicle must be removed and looked at under a microscope. Removing the testicle should not interfere with being able to have sex or to father children. The remaining testicle will go on making sperm and the male sex hormone, testosterone.

CAN TESTICULAR CANCER BE CURED?

Most cases of testicular cancer can be cured, even if the cancer has spread.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM TESTICULAR CANCER?

We do not know how to prevent testicular cancer but the sooner it is detected and treated, the more likely it is to be cured. You can help protect yourself from testicular cancer by doing a monthly testicular self-exam so that if an abnormality develops, it can be evaluated right away. After a while, you will know how your testicles feel and will be more alert to any changes. To do a self-exam, follow these steps:

1. Do the exam after a warm shower or bath. The warmth relaxes the skin of the scrotum, making it easier to feel for anything unusual.
2. Use both hands to examine each testicle. Place your index and middle fingers underneath the testicle and your thumbs on top. Roll the testicle between your thumbs and fingers. (It's normal for testicles to be different in size.)
3. As you feel the testicle, you might notice a cord-like structure on top and in back of the testicle. This structure is called the epididymis. It stores and transports sperm. Do not confuse it with a lump.
4. Feel for any lumps. Lumps can be pea-size or larger and are often painless. If you notice a lump, contact your health care provider.

5. Although the left and right testicles are often different sizes, they should remain the same size. If you notice a change in the size of your testicles, contact your health care provider.
6. You should also get a physical exam once a year.

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