

## TESTICULAR CANCER INFORMATION

### The testicles

The testicles (or testes) are two small oval shaped organs in the scrotum, that hangs below the penis. Often one testicle hangs a little lower than the other one. This is perfectly normal. The testicles are the primary male reproductive organ. From the age of puberty, around 14 years of age, the testicles make sperm, the male reproductive cell. They also make the hormone testosterone. This hormone is responsible for male characteristics such as a deep voice, body and facial hair growth, muscle development and sexual feelings (libido).

### What is testicular cancer?

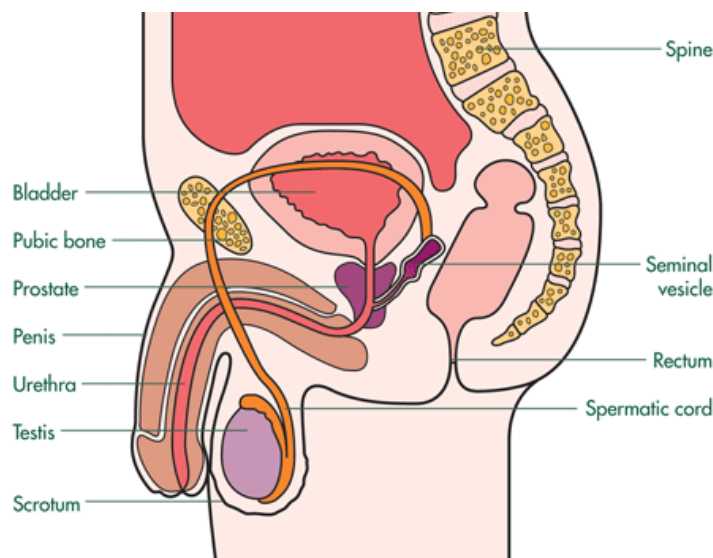
Like other cancers, testicular cancer is a disease of the body's cells. Sometimes cells don't grow normally. When these abnormal cells reproduce they form a lump or tumour. A tumour can be either malignant (cancer) or benign (noncancerous). In testicular cancer the cells in the testicle have grown abnormally. The cancer usually grows in only one testicle. If the cancer is not treated it may spread to other parts of the body. Although the causes of testicular cancer are not well understood, recent developments in treatment make it one of the most curable cancers.

### How common is this cancer?

It is not a very common form of cancer, but it is one of the most common cancer in males aged between 15 and 45 years.

### What are the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer?

The most common sign of testicular cancer is a swelling or a small hard lump in part of one testicle. Most males with testicular cancer notice a difference between the shape and texture of their testicles. One grows larger, becomes harder or changes shape compared with the other. Any difference between the two testicles should be treated as an early warning sign and should be checked by your doctor. Tumours are often painless but some men have described an ache in their lower stomach or groin, or a pain in one of their testicles. Some describe a feeling of 'heaviness' in the scrotum. Most lumps are not cancerous, but a man who experiences any of the changes mentioned earlier or any discomfort in the testicular area, should contact their doctor immediately. Prompt diagnosis and treatment can cure most cases of testicular cancer. Don't wait or think that because there is no pain that there is nothing to worry about. If left untreated, the cancer can spread to other parts of the body.



## TESTICULAR CANCER INFORMATION CONTINUED

### Treatment for testicular cancer

An operation to surgically remove the cancer affected testicle (an orchidectomy) is the usual treatment for testicular cancer. Chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or a combination of these, may also be used to treat testicular cancer. The type of treatment will depend on the type of cancer, and whether it has spread beyond the testicle. Some treatments do have side effects. Any effect on fertility is usually temporary, and the remaining testicle produces enough sperm to maintain fertility. In a small number of cases fertility may be a problem. Speak to your doctor about fertility before you start treatment. There is not normally any change in a man's ability to have erections or engage in sexual intercourse.

### Those at risk

Although the cause of testicular cancer is not fully understood, it is known that a man who has had an undescended testicle (known as cryptorchidism), is at increased risk of developing testicular cancer later in life. This is still a risk whether it was treated during childhood or not. Please seek advice from a doctor.

### Other risk factors include:

- Being a man aged between 20 and 40
- Having a father or brother with testicular cancer
- Having a wasted (atrophied) testicle
- Previous inflammation of a testicle caused by mumps
- History of fertility problems
- Previous testicular cancer

If you are at higher risk of testicular cancer, discuss this with your doctor.

### Testicular awareness

All men should be aware of the normal look and feel of their testicles and check with their doctor should any unusual signs or symptoms occur. What is important is that any discomfort, pain, swelling, or change to the normal condition of the testicles is reported to a doctor without delay.

### Remember:

Testicular cancer is one of the most curable cancers when found early. Men need to see a doctor if they find any difference between their testicles or if they are in a high-risk group. Don't let embarrassment get in the way of seeing your doctor and discussing the issue of testicular cancer.



#### LOOK

Check your testicles just after you've had a bath or shower, when the muscles in the scrotum are relaxed, making it easier for you to feel any lumps, growths or tenderness. Stand in front of the mirror. Look for any swelling on the skin of your scrotum.



#### HOLD

Hold your scrotum in your hands and feel the size and weight of each testicle. It is common for one testicle to be slightly larger or hang lower than the other.



#### FEEL

Feel each testicle and roll it between your thumb and finger. It should feel smooth. It's normal to feel a soft, tender tube towards the back of each testicle. You shouldn't feel any pain when checking your testicles.



#### REPEAT

Once familiar with how your testicles feel, keep an eye out for any changes. If you detect a change, don't freak out, just see a doctor as soon as possible.

## TESTICULAR CANCER QUIZ

1. The testicles are two small oval- shaped organs in the scrotum T/F
2. The testicles hang above the penis T/F
3. Testicular cancer is a disease of the body's cells T/F
4. The cancer usually grows in both testicles T/F
5. Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in males aged between 15 and 45 years T/F
6. The most common sign of testicular cancer is a swelling or small hard lump in part of one testicle T/F
7. Prompt diagnosis and treatment decrease your chances of curing the cancer T/F
8. It is crucial to ask for an ultrasound screening when you visit a doctor T/F
9. You are not at risk of testicular cancer if your father or brother had it T/F
10. Testicular cancer is one of the most curable cancers if detected early T/F

SCORE:    /10

