

## Self Examination

### ***EARLY DETECTION IS KEY!***

Performing monthly testicular self-examinations is a quick and painless way to keep in tune with your testicular health and detect any changes!

### **How to Perform a Testicular Self-Examination**

A testicular self-examination is most effective after a warm shower when the testes are relaxed.

1. Visually and manually check for swelling or heaviness.
2. Manually manipulate each testicle fully with both hands. Place your thumbs on the top of the testicle, with your index and middle fingers under the testicle you are examining. Roll the testicle around feeling for any lumps or abnormalities. This should not be painful.
3. Repeat the procedure on the other testicle. You should not be alarmed if the testicles are not identical in size as this is not uncommon. However, if you notice shrinkage or enlargement of one or both of the testicles in comparison to your last self-examination, you should seek medical attention.

Some men with *testicular cancer* have no symptoms at all, however the following list shows common signs of possible *testicular cancer*.

#### ***Things to watch for are:***

- Changes in the size of one or both testicles (swelling or shrinking)
- Lumps; Lumps may be painful or not painful at all, but any lumps or knots should be checked by a Physician
- Aches/Discomfort/Pain in the groin, scrotum or testicle
- Feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- Lower back pain
- Lower abdominal aching
- Swelling, enlargement or tenderness of the breasts
- Sudden build up of fluid in the scrotum
- Shortness of breath and/or chest pain

If at any point you detect any of the signs or symptoms above, or anything else unusual, you should seek medical attention immediately. While if caught early, *testicular cancer* has one of the highest cure rates of all cancers, it is an aggressive cancer and can grow and spread rapidly. If embarrassment is a problem, just remember that this visit will give you peace of mind and possibly save your life!

### **Causes of Testicular Cancer:**

Almost all testicular cancers begin in germ cells, or sex cells. A rogue cell will develop an abnormality. When the cell reproduces, the new cells also have the mutation. As uncontrolled cell growth continues to replicate, they form a mass, or lump. It is unclear what causes the abnormalities in germ cells to begin with.

## **Risk Factors for Testicular Cancer**

Though the causes of *testicular cancer* are largely unknown, some risk factors have been linked to *testicular cancer*. (A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood of developing a disease.) Still, most men diagnosed with testicular cancers have no known risk factors.

### ***Some Known Risk Factors Include:***

#### **Personal history of testicular cancer:**

Men who have previously had testicular cancer are at increased risk to develop it in the other testicle.

#### **Age:**

Testicular cancer is most common among men aged 15-35, but **men of all ages** are vulnerable! Approximately 50% of the cases of testicular cancer occur in men between the ages of 20 and 34.

#### **Race:**

While there is no concrete data to explain why, Caucasian men have experienced a higher incidence testicular cancer than men of other races.

#### **Family history:**

Research shows men with a close family history of testicular cancer are at higher risk for developing testicular cancer than men with no family history.

#### **Medical history:**

Males born with an undescended testicle (cryptorchidism) are at increased risk of developing *testicular cancer*. Approximately 3% of males are born with this condition. One or both of the testicles do not descend from the abdomen into the scrotum prior to birth, as is normal. In many cases, the testicle will descend into the scrotum during the first year of life. If this does not happen, surgery may be needed to bring the undescended testicle out of the abdomen.

A diagnosis of HIV or AIDS puts men at increased risk for developing testicular cancer, although for reasons unknown.

Diseases causing abnormal testicular development will increase the likelihood of a man developing *testicular cancer*.

If you have any of the warning signs or are experiencing any symptoms associated with testicular cancer, see your doctor right away. Also inform your physician if you have had a personal history, family history or medical history that may put you at increased risk.

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/testicularcancer/overviewguide/testicular-cancer-overview-what-causes>

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help/type/testicular-cancer/about/testicular-cancer-risks-and-causes>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/testicular-cancer/in-depth/CON-20043068>

<http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/testicular-cancer/symptoms-and-signs>