

Testicular self awareness

Whether to do testicular self examination (TSE) is a personal matter. Testicular self examination is likely to detect the disease at an early stage, when prompt treatment has a better chance of curing most cancers. While large-scale research trials have not found clear evidence of regular self examination reducing deaths from testicular cancer, some men may feel safer doing this. Men who are in the high-risk group, with a personal history of undescended testicles, a family history of testicular cancer (father or brother) or one of the other risk factors listed previously, may be advised to regularly check for lumps or swelling on the surface of the testicles. We suggest you discuss this with your doctor.

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.



Where to go for more information?

For further information contact
The Cancer Council Helpline
toll free on **13 11 20**.



Brisbane

553 Gregory Terrace,
Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
Telephone (07) 3258 2200

Cairns

169 Aumuller Street,
Bungalow Qld 4870
Telephone (07) 4031 1555

Townsville

24 Warburton Street, North
Ward Qld 4810
Telephone (07) 4721 1644

Rockhampton

43 Upper Dawson Road,
Rockhampton Qld 4700
Telephone (07) 4927 7088

Sunshine Coast

Shop 4, Credit Union
Australia Plaza
Cnr Maroochydore Road and
Baden Powell Street
Maroochydore Qld 4558
Telephone (07) 5443 6300

Gold Coast

Cnr Short Street and
Marine Parade,
Southport Qld 4215
Telephone (07) 5591 1500

Toowoomba

137 Herries Street,
Toowoomba Qld 4350
Telephone (07) 4638 4799

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www.cancerqld.org.au

The Cancer Council Queensland

TESTICULAR CANCER



Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

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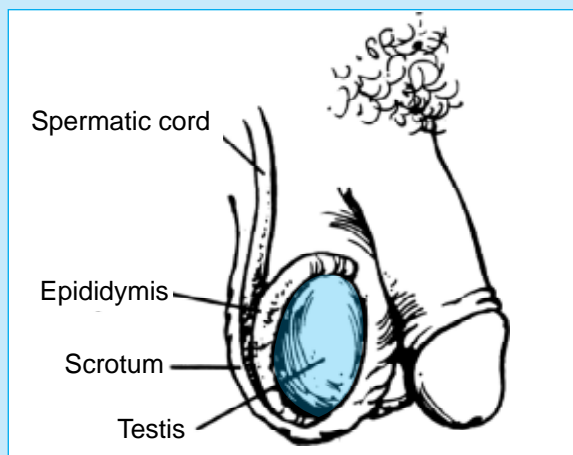
We are an independent, community-based charity and are not government funded

For information and support contact our Helpline
on 13 11 20, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm



The testicles

Commonly known as 'balls' or 'nuts', the testicles (or testes) are two small, oval-shaped organs in the pouch of skin that hangs below the penis (in the scrotum). Often one testicle hangs a little lower than the other one. This is perfectly normal.



The testicles are the primary male reproductive organs. From the time of puberty, at about 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 do not grow normally. When these abnormal cells reproduce, they form a lump or tumour. A tumour can be either malignant (cancer) or benign (non-cancerous).

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. You can't catch cancer. You can't pass it on to your partner or anyone else. Testicular cancer can't be caught through sexual intercourse. Additionally, a knock or a blow to the testicles does not cause cancer.

How common is testicular cancer?

It is not a very common form of cancer, but it is one of the most common cancers in males aged between 15 and 45 years. In Queensland in 2004, 114 cases of testicular cancer were diagnosed and there were six deaths.

What are the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer?

The most common sign or symptom 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 may grow larger, become harder or change shape compared to the other. Any difference between the two testicles should be treated as an early warning sign.

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.

Prompt diagnosis and treatment can cure most cases of testicular cancer.

Not all swellings in the scrotum will be cancerous, with a collection of fluid around the testicle (hydrocoele) or cysts much more common. However, any 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 there is nothing to worry about. If cancers are left untreated, ultimately they are likely to spread to other parts of the body.

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 your doctor.

Other risk factors may include:

- Testicular cancer in a father or a brother;
- A wasted (atrophied) testicle from whatever cause, for example, mumps; and
- Having previously had testicular cancer.

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