

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in males between the ages of 15 and 35 years but men of any age can develop this medical condition. This cancer can develop rapidly and so it is important that men of all ages know the signs and symptoms of this condition. Globally, the incidence of this type of cancer is increasing.

Where are the testicles?

The testicles are a part of the male reproductive system. Men have two testicles and they are normally smaller than a golf ball in size and located within the scrotum. They produce and store sperm and are the body's main source of male hormones.

What is testicular cancer?

Our body is made up of cells. When these cells begin to multiply in an abnormal manner cancer can develop. Testicular cancer occurs when this process occurs in the tissue of the testicles. There are several types of testicular cancer because of the number of different types of testicular cells.

What increases my risk?

Risk Factor is anything that increases the likelihood that you will develop a disease. Having a risk factor does not mean that you will develop a disease. Risk factors for testicular cancer include:

Age - Men between the ages of 15 and 35 are at greatest risk.

Undescended testicle (Cryptorchidism)

When the male fetus develops the testicles develop in the abdomen and descend into the scrotum before birth. Sometimes a testicle does not do this before birth and this will put a man at increased risk. The risk remains even if the testicle has been relocated to the scrotum. Testicular cancer can develop in either testicle of a man who has this condition.

Race - This cancer is more common in white men.

Family History - A man is at increased risk for this type of cancer if his brother or son has been diagnosed with testicular cancer.

What decreases my risk?

The major risk factors for this type of cancer are all things which a man has no control over so it is not currently possible to prevent most cases of this disease. However, knowing your family and personal medical history is important.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms of testicular cancer that you may notice are:

- A painless lump or swelling in either testicle.
- A significant enlargement or shrinking of the testicle.
- A change in how the testicle feels.
- A dull ache or feeling of heaviness in the lower abdomen, groin or scrotum.

- A sudden build-up of fluid in the scrotum.
- Pain or discomfort in a testicle or scrotum.
- Pus or blood in your semen.

Screening

Screening refers to looking for the presence of a disease or condition before symptoms develop. It is recommended that all men perform a monthly testicular self-examination (TSE) on the same day each month beginning at puberty.

What is the TSE?

Here's what to do: It's best to do a TSE during or right after a hot shower or bath. The scrotum (skin that covers the testicles) is most relaxed then, which makes it easier to examine the testicles. Examine one testicle at a time. Use both hands to gently roll each testicle (with slight pressure) between your fingers. Place your thumbs over the top of your testicle, with the index and middle fingers of each hand behind the testicle, and then roll it between your fingers. You should be able to feel the epididymis (the sperm-carrying tube), which feels soft, rope-like, and slightly tender to pressure, and is located at the top of the back part of each testicle. This is a normal lump. Remember that one testicle (usually the right one) is slightly larger than the other for most guys - this is also normal. When examining each testicle, feel for any lumps or bumps along the front or sides. Lumps may be as small as a piece of rice or a pea. If you notice any swelling, lumps, or changes in the size or color of a testicle, or if you have any pain or achy areas in your groin, let your doctor know right away. The important thing is to know what is normal for you.

Diagnosis of testicular cancer

If your doctor suspects that you have testicular cancer he or she will order additional tests including ultrasound of the testicles and blood tests.

The only way to confirm a diagnosis is to surgically remove the testicle and do a biopsy. It is not recommended that they do a biopsy by just removing a sample of cells and trying to save the testicle.

Considerations

Men can have a normal sex life, maintaining an erection and fathering children with one testicle. It is also possible to collect and 'bank' sperm for future use.

It is important that testicular cancer be caught at the earliest possible stage as there are lymph nodes in close proximity to the testicles and the cancer can therefore easily and quickly spread to the abdomen, lungs, brain and other organs.

If a man has had a testicle removed and is concerned about his appearance, he can have a prosthetic testicle made.

How to become involved

The Cayman Islands Cancer Society is an independent non-profit organization. Our aim is to increase awareness among the people of the Cayman Islands of cancer as a major health condition, to promote leadership in a range of areas, to prevent the development of cancer and to counsel and support cancer patients and their families.

We provide a number of programs and services including cancer awareness and prevention programs, screening, and financial and other assistance to cancer patients. You can support the society by becoming a member, making a donation, donating goods and services or volunteering your time.

Contact us

For more information on testicular cancer or the Cayman Islands Cancer Society, please contact us.

Cayman Islands Cancer Society,

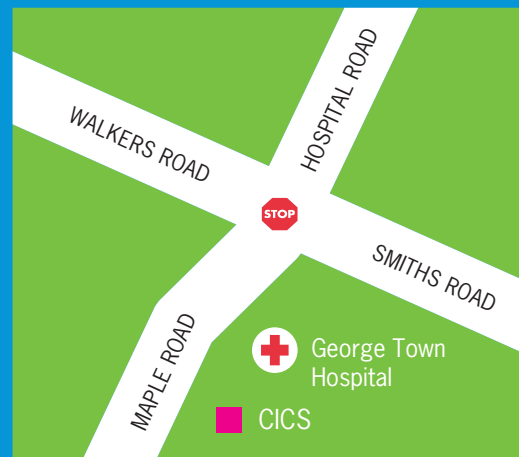
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testicular cancer

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