

Testicular Cancer

What you should know

What is testicular cancer?

Testicular cancer is when the normal cells in your testicle grow in an abnormal way to form a mass of cells called a tumour.

Some facts about testicular cancer

- ▶ Testicular cancer is rare, but it is the most common cancer in young men aged 15-44 in Ireland.
- ▶ Testicular cancer is very treatable and usually curable.
- ▶ Usually, the testicle is removed if cancer is suspected, but this shouldn't affect your fertility or sex life.

How common is testicular cancer?

- ▶ Testicular cancer is not common.
- ▶ Around 170 men and adolescents in Ireland are diagnosed each year.

We use the term 'men' to talk about how many people get testicular cancer (incidence), as this is how statistics are recorded.

What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

Common symptoms:

- ▶ A painless lump or swelling in a testicle.
- ▶ Pain, discomfort or heaviness in your testicle or scrotum.
- ▶ Pain or a dull ache in your groin or tummy.

Less common symptoms:

- ▶ A dull ache in your back.
- ▶ Tenderness in your breast tissue.
- ▶ Stomach ache.
- ▶ Shortness of breath.
- ▶ A painless lump in the side of your neck.

Always get any change that is unusual for you checked by your GP (family doctor). Even if you have pain or swelling after an injury, for example after playing sport, it is still a good idea to get it checked out.

These symptoms can be caused by other things, but always get them checked.

How can I check myself?

The best time to examine yourself is after a warm shower or bath when the skin of your scrotum is relaxed.



1. Hold your scrotum in your hands.



2. Use the fingers and thumbs of both hands to examine your testicles.



3. Gently feel each testicle, one at a time, for any change in their size or weight.

Remember:

- ▶ It is common for one testicle to be slightly larger or hang lower than the other.
- ▶ The testicle itself should be smooth, with no lumps or swellings.
- ▶ It is normal to feel a soft tube at the top and back of the testicle. This is the sperm-collecting tube (epididymis).
- ▶ Check again every month – you can set a reminder on your phone.

What should I do if I have any symptoms?

If you have any symptoms or changes in your body that you are worried about, it's important to have them checked by your GP (family doctor). The chances are it will not be cancer. Getting your symptoms checked is not wasting anyone's time. The sooner cancer is spotted, the more likely you are to recover from it.

Can I be screened for testicular cancer?

Testing for testicular cancer when you have no symptoms is called screening. There is no testicular cancer screening programme in Ireland at present. If you are worried or feel you may be at risk, talk to your GP.

How is testicular cancer diagnosed?

If your doctor thinks your symptoms need to be investigated, you will have more tests. Tests that can help to diagnose testicular cancer include:

- ▶ **Physical exam and history:** Your doctor will look at and feel your testicles, tummy, pelvis and penis. The doctor will also ask you about your symptoms, and your medical and family history.
- ▶ **Ultrasound scan:** A scan to see if there is a lump in your testicle.
- ▶ **Blood tests:** Tests to look for 'tumour markers' in your blood. These are chemicals that are released by some testicular cancers into the bloodstream.
- ▶ **Removing the testicle (orchidectomy):** Your doctor can tell if a lump or swelling is cancer by removing the whole testicle so that the cells can be examined under a microscope. Removing the testicle is done because taking a small piece (biopsy) of the testicle may miss cancerous cells.

Expect to be treated if your doctor suspects or diagnoses testicular cancer. Treatment may happen very quickly.

If you need to talk to someone, contact our Support Line or visit your nearest Daffodil Centre to talk to one of our cancer nurses. Contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

The nurses can also put you in touch with a Survivor Support volunteer who has had testicular cancer. They can support you at this time.



If you are diagnosed with cancer, you can read more details in our booklet Understanding testicular cancer.



What increases my risk of testicular cancer?



Undescended testicle

Testicular cancer is more common in adults whose testicle or testicles did not come down into their scrotum when they were babies.



Previous history of testicular cancer

If you had testicular cancer before, your risk is slightly higher.



Family history

If your brother or father had the disease, your risk is higher.



Fertility problems

If you have fertility problems, your risk is slightly increased.



Ethnic group

White men have a higher chance of getting testicular cancer than Black or Asian men.

Risk factors increase your chance of getting testicular cancer. Having a risk factor doesn't mean you will get testicular cancer. Sometimes people with no risk factors get the disease.

How can I reduce my risk of testicular cancer?

Check yourself:

You are more likely to survive cancer if you spot it at an early stage. Learn what feels normal for you and check your testicles every month.

Visit your GP if you notice anything unusual. For example, a lump, swelling, pain or anything that feels different.



Contact us for more information or support

If you are worried or have questions about testicular cancer or any cancer:



**Call our Support Line on Freephone
1800 200 700.**



Email supportline@irishcancer.ie

We will provide you with confidential advice, support and information.



Ask about a call in your language.

Visit our **Daffodil Centres**, where our nurses can give you advice about how to spot cancer early and how to help prevent it. To find out where your local Daffodil Centre is, email **daffodilcentreinfo@irishcancer.ie**

Visit our website **www.cancer.ie** for more information on testicular cancer and ways you can reduce your risk of cancer.

