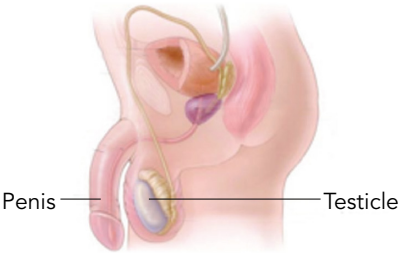
nccp National Cancer Control Programme

Check Yourself Guide
Testicular Exam

HSE

1 What are the testicles?

The testicles are two small ovalshaped glands. They are located below the penis in the sac of skin called the scrotum. They produce the male hormone, testosterone, as well as sperm.



2 What is testicular cancer?

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men between the ages of 15 and 45. It is a rare cancer, accounting for only about 1% of all cancers in men. It is highly curable, especially when found and treated early. The cure rate is over 90%.

3 What are the risk factors for testicular cancer?

The exact cause of testicular cancer is not known. There is no link between testicular cancer and any habits, activities or lifestyles. The risk is increased if you had an undescended testicle or if you had testicular cancer.

4 What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

Symptoms may include:

- a small, painless lump on the testicle,
- a change in the way the testicle feels,
- heaviness in the scrotum, or
- a painful or enlarged testicle.

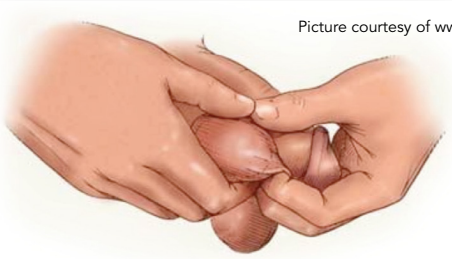
Other symptoms can include a dull ache in the lower abdomen, back or groin area, or breast tenderness. These symptoms might not be due to cancer. **However, if you notice any of these symptoms, you should visit your GP without delay.**

5 How do I do a testicular self-examination?

Take the following steps:

- Compare one testicle with the other to become familiar with what is normal for you. Do this by gently resting a testicle in the palm/ fingers of each hand. It is normal for one testicle to be larger or hang down slightly lower than the other.
- Then examine one testicle at a time, using both hands. Place your index and middle fingers under the testicle and your thumbs on top (see picture).
- Roll the testicle gently between your thumbs and fingers.

Picture courtesy of www.mayoclinic.com



You should check yourself regularly from around the age of 15. A good time to examine your testicles is after a warm bath or shower when the muscles are relaxed and the testicles hang down.

6 So what am I looking for?

You are feeling for any lump that is not normal. A lump will be about the size of a pea either on the front or side of the testicle. You will also feel the 'epididymis', a thin tube on the top and back of the testicle that stores and transports sperm. If you are worried you should visit your GP without delay.

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