

Testicular Cancer

Signs, symptoms and testing



Key signs and symptoms

01

A lump or swelling in your testicle

02

Your testicle gets bigger

03

A heavy, firm or hard scrotum

04

Pain in your testicle or scrotum

These symptoms can be caused by conditions other than cancer, but it's important to get them checked by a GP.

Testicular cancer basics and next steps

Who is at higher risk for testicular cancer?

Most cases of testicular cancer are in men aged 15–49. The risk is higher if your dad or brother has had it and if you've had it before. Some conditions, like undescended testicles, hypospadias (in which the opening of the urethra is on the underside of the penis) and HIV or AIDS, also increase risk. Risk is also higher if you are from a white British background.

How is testicular cancer diagnosed?

Tests to check for testicular cancer can include a physical examination, a blood test and an ultrasound scan. These might be followed by a referral to a specialist.

What if someone has a family history of testicular cancer?

It's important for people who have a family history of testicular cancer to check with their GP about genetic counselling. Get to know how your testicles look and feel, check them regularly and contact your GP if there are any changes.

How can testicular cancer be prevented?

Testicular cancer cannot be prevented but it can be caught early, and is highly treatable.

It helps to know what your testicles usually look and feel like, and to be aware of their normal size and weight, so changes, including any lumps or swellings, are more obvious. Some people find that checking themselves after a bath or shower works well.

Not smoking and maintaining a healthy weight are highly recommended for cancer prevention in general.

When should you contact a GP?

- ✓ If you notice any of the symptoms on page one.
- ✓ If symptoms persist or feel different or new.
- ✓ If you are at a higher risk for testicular cancer.
- ✓ If you feel worried it's always better to check.

45%

of men aged 16–44 worry about getting cancer in the future.

29%

the increase in testicular cancer incidence rates since the early 1990s.

96%

of men will survive testicular cancer.

Common myths about testicular cancer

Myth *“It’s rare, so not worth worrying about”*

Fact Testicular cancer affects around 2,400 men a year in the UK, it’s important to self-check regularly.

Myth *“I’m too young to get testicular cancer”*

Fact While the risk of many cancers increases with age, testicular cancer mostly affects younger men.

Myth *“If you lose a testicle to cancer, you can no longer have children”*

Fact The remaining testicle usually produces enough sperm and testosterone for normal sexual function and fertility.

Myth *“Only men with a family history need to worry about testicular cancer”*

Fact While family history is a risk factor, most men diagnosed with testicular cancer have no known family history of the disease.

Myth *“A physical injury to the testicles can increase the risk of cancer”*

Fact Trauma to the testicles does not cause cancer, though it might lead to finding an existing tumour.

Myth *“There is a screening programme”*

Fact There isn’t a national screening programme for testicular cancer in the UK, as there isn’t a test that reliably picks up testicular cancer at an early stage.