

Symptoms of testicular cancer and how men can look for them

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Men can do many things to maintain their overall health over the long haul. Eating right and exercising regularly can help men live long and reduce their risk for various diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. Learning about their bodies and how to detect abnormalities is another step men can take to stay healthy, potentially helping them catch certain diseases, including testicular cancer, before they reach advanced stages.

Men under 50 may not pay much mind to cancer, but the American Cancer Society notes that young and middle-aged men are more likely than men over 55 to be diagnosed with testicular cancer. In fact, the ACS reports that the average age at which men are diagnosed with testicular cancer is 33.

Learning the symptoms of testicular cancer and how to detect them may not prevent men from getting the disease. However, such knowledge can increase the chances that men detect symptoms when the disease is in its earliest, most treatable stages.

What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

The American Urological Association notes that testicular tumors may produce various symptoms. A painless lump in the testicle is the most common sign of testicular cancer, but men also may experience swelling of the testicle or a feeling of weight in the scrotum, a pain or dull ache in the testicle, scrotum or groin, or tenderness or changes in the male breast tissue.

Are symptoms always accompanied by pain?

The AUA notes that swelling in the testicle may or may not include pain, so men should not ignore swelling simply because it's not accompanied by pain. In fact, the AUA reports that very few men who develop testicular cancer feel pain at first. However, men may eventually experience pain. In fact, pain may indicate that the tumor is growing. The experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine note that serious, acute pain is associated with rapidly growing tumors. Feelings of dull scrotal

discomfort or heaviness are often described by patients experiencing pain.

The importance of reporting symptoms

Unfortunately, the symptoms of testicular cancer are not always reported quickly. According to the AUA, men wait an average of five months before reporting any symptoms or abnormalities to their physicians. That's a mistake, as tumors can spread in that time. Any symptoms, however innocuous they may seem, should be reported to a physician. That's especially true for any symptoms that have lasted for more than two weeks.



AUA recommends this four-step self-examination, which is simple and only takes a few minutes.

1. Check each testicle. Gently but firmly roll each testicle between the thumb and forefingers. Feel the whole surface. The firmness of the testis should be the same all around. Men should know that it's normal for one testicle to be slightly larger than the other.

2. Find the epididymis and vas deferens. These are soft, tube-like structures above and behind the testicle. These tubes collect and carry sperm. Young men can familiarize themselves with how these cords feel so they can more capably recognize any abnormalities that may appear.

3. Look for lumps, swelling or anything that does not seem right. Lumps or bumps are not normal, even if they cause no pain. Pain also is not normal, even if it's only mild.

4. Check yourself at least once per month. Always look for any changes in size, shape or texture.

Testicular cancer is not common. However, men must recognize the threat the disease can pose and include measures to look for and identify its symptoms in their health care routines.

How to conduct a self-exam

Self-exams can help men discover any abnormalities that may be symptomatic of testicular cancer. The AUA recommends that men conduct self-exams after a warm bath or shower, while standing, and when the scrotum is relaxed. The



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