

Testicular Cancer

Testicular cancer is one of the most treatable and survivable types of cancer if detected early. Testicular cancer occurs when cells of one or both testicles become cancerous. A disease most often associated with young men, testicular cancer is often diagnosed in men ages 20 to 34. The disease is essentially unpreventable as most risk factors are present at birth, and men with no risk factors can also be diagnosed with testicular cancer. However, if detected and treated in early stages when the cancer is only in the testicle, testicular cancer patients have a 99 percent chance of survival after five years. Most cases of testicular cancer are initially identified by the patient, making self-observation critical to early detection.

Statistics

- In 2020, an estimated 9,610 new cases of testicular cancer and 440 deaths from the disease will occur in the United States.
- In Texas, an estimated 782 men are expected to be diagnosed with testicular cancer, with 39 deaths from the disease in 2020.
- Testicular cancer is a rare form of cancer. About one in 250 males will have testicular cancer in his lifetime, and an estimated one in 5,000 men will die from the disease. The rate of testicular cancer cases has increased over many decades, but the rate of increase has slowed recently.

Risk Factors

- **Age:** Men between the ages of 20 and 34 account for about half of all testicular cancer cases.
- **Family History:** Men with close relatives (father or brother) who have had testicular cancer face an increased risk for the disease.
- **Race:** In the United States, Caucasian men are more likely to develop testicular cancer than men of other races.
- **Undescended Testicle:** Men who have one or two undescended testicles face a significantly increased risk for testicular cancer. Surgery to correct an undescended testicle may decrease the risk if performed early in childhood.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Men with HIV and AIDS may have an elevated risk of testicular cancer.

Symptoms

Many cases of testicular cancer are detected by men who report unusual symptoms to their physicians. Monthly self-checks are very important for early detection of testicular cancer. If any of the following symptoms are present, men are encouraged to consult their physician for proper testing.

- Sudden build-up of fluid in the scrotum
- Change in feeling of a testicle
- Swelling of legs due to blood clot
- Discomfort in the groin or lower abdomen area
- Swollen testicles or a lump with no pain
- Pain, numbness, or hardness in the testicle or scrotum area
- Heavy feeling in the scrotum
- Growth or tenderness of breast tissue
- Lower back or chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up blood
- Headaches or confusion
- Signs of puberty at an abnormally young age

Treatment Options

Treatment options vary depending on how advanced the cancer is and if it has spread to other parts of the body. Physicians will determine the most appropriate treatment for each patient, but possible treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and stem cell transplant. Some treatments can cause infertility. Patients should talk with a physician about options to preserve fertility or bank sperm.

Sources: American Cancer Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, National Cancer Institute, and Texas Cancer Registry



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