



The British Association of Urological Surgeons

35-43 Lincoln's Inn
Fields
London
WC2A 3PE

Phone: +44 (0)20 7869 6950
Fax: +44 (0)20 7404 5048
Website: www.baus.org.uk
E-mail: admin@baus.org.uk

TESTICULAR SELF-EXAMINATION

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS

Introduction

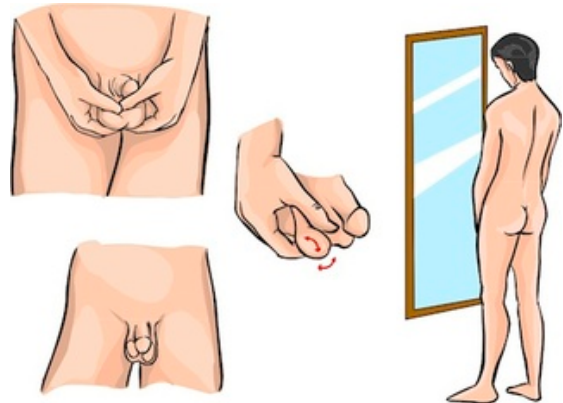
It is generally accepted that monthly breast self-examination for women is an effective part of early breast cancer detection. For men, starting at puberty, monthly self-examination of the testicles is also an effective way of detecting testicular cancer (TC) at an early, and potentially curable, stage.

When should I do self-examination?

Self-examination is best performed after a warm bath or shower. Warmth relaxes the scrotum, making it easier to feel anything abnormal.

How should I do it?

- stand in front of a mirror;
- check for any external swelling on the skin;
- examine each testicle with both hands. Place the index and middle fingers under the testicle with the thumbs placed on top. Roll the testicle gently between the thumbs and fingers. You should not feel any pain when doing this. Don't be alarmed if your testicles are not exactly the same size; and
- find the epididymis, the soft, tube-like structure behind the testicle that collects and carries sperm. If you are familiar with this structure, you won't mistake it for a suspicious lump. Cancerous lumps are usually found on the sides or front of the testicle. Lumps in the epididymis are virtually never cancerous.



What if I find an abnormality?

If you find a lump, see a doctor right away. The abnormality may not be cancer but could simply be an infection. If it is testicular cancer, it will spread if it is not stopped by treatment. Waiting and hoping will not fix anything.

Free-floating lumps in the scrotum that are not attached in any way to a testicle are not testicular cancer.

When in doubt, get it checked out - if only for peace of mind!

What other conditions may be important?

- any enlargement of a testicle;
- significant loss of size in one of the testicles;
- feeling of heaviness in the scrotum;
- dull ache in the lower abdomen or in the groin;
- sudden collection of fluid in the scrotum;
- pain or discomfort in a testicle or in the scrotum; and
- enlargement or tenderness of the breasts.

Anything out of the ordinary should be mentioned to your GP but the following are not usually signs of testicular cancer:

- a pimple, ingrown hair or rash on the scrotal skin;
- a free-floating lump in the scrotum, seemingly not attached to anything;
- a lump on the epididymis or tubes coming from the testicle that feels like an extra testicle;
- pain or burning when you pass urine; or
- blood in the urine or semen.



Remember

**Only a doctor can make a positive (or negative) diagnosis for you.
If you find something abnormal, do not delay in seeing your doctor.**

Are there any other important points?

This booklet includes advice from specialists, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and other sources. You should read this booklet with any advice your GP or other healthcare professional may already have given you.

Disclaimer

While we have made every effort to be sure the information in this booklet is accurate, we cannot guarantee there are no errors or omissions. We cannot accept responsibility for any loss resulting from something that anyone has, or has not, done as a result of the information in this booklet.

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