



Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Know the signs of testicular cancer

Testicular cancer is rare but it is the most common cancer among young men.

Testicular cancer occurs when cells that aren't normal grow out of control in the testicles (testes). It is highly curable, especially when it is found early.

The most common symptoms of testicular cancer include:

- A lump or swelling in the scrotum that may or may not be painful.
- A heavy feeling in the scrotum.
- A dull pain or feeling of pressure in the lower belly or groin.

Experts don't know what causes testicular cancer. But some problems, such as having an undescended testicle or Klinefelter syndrome, may increase a man's risk for this cancer. Most men who get testicular cancer don't have any risk factors.

How is testicular cancer diagnosed?

Most men find testicular cancer themselves by chance or during a self-examination. Or a doctor may find it during a routine physical examination.

Because other problems can cause symptoms like those of testicular cancer, your doctor may order tests to find out if you have another problem. These tests may include blood tests and imaging tests of the testicles such as an ultrasound or a CT scan.

If these tests show signs of cancer, you will have surgery to remove the testicle. Surgery is the only way to know for sure if you have testicular cancer and what kind of cancer it is. This information also helps in planning any other treatment you may need.

How is it treated?

For some people, surgery to remove the testicle may be all the treatment they need. The type and stage of your cancer will help your doctor know if you need more treatment.

Treatment after surgery may include surveillance, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy. Chemotherapy is often used for cancer that has spread to other parts of the body. In some cases, surgery is used to remove that kind of cancer.

How will having testicular cancer affect you?

In most cases, removing a testicle doesn't cause long-term sexual problems or make you unable to father children. But if you had these problems before treatment, surgery may make them worse. And other treatments for cancer may cause you to become infertile. You may want to think about saving sperm in a sperm bank. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about sexual problems or whether you can father children.