

Testicular Cancer

Testicular cancer is one of the most treatable and survivable types of cancer. The disease occurs when cells of one or both testicles become cancerous. A disease most often associated with young men, testicular cancer is most commonly diagnosed in men between 20 and 39, and is the most common cancer type found in men ages 15 to 34. The disease is essentially unpreventable, as the 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, 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 2010, an estimated 8,480 new cases of testicular cancer and 350 deaths from the disease occurred in the United States.
- In Texas, it is estimated that 647 men will be diagnosed with testicular cancer, and 36 will die of the disease in 2011.
- Testicular cancer is very rare in the scope of all forms of cancer, representing just 1 percent of all cancers affecting men in the United States.
- About one in 300 males will have testicular cancer in their lifetime and an estimated one in 5,000 men will die from the disease.
- The rate of testicular cancer cases is on the rise in white American men. Incident rates for white men are more than twice as high as they were 40 years ago, while the rates in African-American men have only recently begun to rise.

Risk Factors

- **Age:** Men between the ages of 20 and 54 account for about 90 percent of all testicular cancer cases.
- **Congenital Abnormalities:** Men who have abnormalities of the kidneys, penis, or testicles from birth may be at risk for testicular cancer.
- **Family History:** Men with close relatives (father or brother) who have had testicular cancer face a slightly increased risk for the disease.
- **Hernia:** A hernia in the groin area may increase risk for the disease.
- **Race:** White American men have the highest rate of testicular cancer and are about 50 percent more likely to be diagnosed with the disease than African-American men.
- **Undescended Testicle:** Men who have one or two undescended testicles face a significantly increased risk for testicular cancer. Surgery to correct an undescended testicle does not decrease risk.

Symptoms

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

- Discomfort in the groin, abdomen, or lower back area
- Build-up of liquid in the scrotum
- Swollen testicles or a lump with no pain
- Change in feeling or sudden growth of the testicle
- Pain in the testicle or scrotum area
- Heavy feeling in the scrotum

Treatment Options

Testicular cancer is a very treatable cancer, especially if identified in the early stages: more than 95 percent of these patients are cancer-free after treatment completion. 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, and chemotherapy.

Sources: American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, Sean Kimerling Testicular Cancer Foundation, and Texas Cancer Registry



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