



TESTICULAR SELF-EXAMINATION

Frequently-asked questions (FAQs) from
The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS)

The aim of the leaflet is to provide you with detailed information about how to perform regular testicular self-examination.

We have consulted specialist surgeons during its preparation, so it represents best practice in UK urology. You should use it in addition to any advice already given to you.

To view the online version of this leaflet, type the text below into your web browser:

[http://www.baus.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Testicular self examination.pdf](http://www.baus.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Testicular%20self%20examination.pdf)

Introduction

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

When should I do self-examination?

It is best to carry out testicular self-examination after a warm bath or shower. Warmth relaxes your 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 your index and middle fingers under your testicle with your thumbs placed on top. Roll each testicle gently between your thumbs and fingers. You should not feel any pain when doing this. Do not be alarmed if your testicles are not exactly the same size
- find the epididymis, a soft tube-like structure behind the testicle that collects and carries sperm. If you are familiar with this structure, you will not mistake it for a suspicious lump. Cancerous lumps are usually found on the sides or in front of the testicle. Lumps in the epididymis are virtually never cancerous.

What if I find an abnormality?

If you find a lump, ask to 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 to your testicle are not cancerous.

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

What other abnormalities 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
- 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, 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
- blood in the urine or semen

What sources have we used to prepare this leaflet?

This leaflet uses information from consensus panels and other evidence-based sources including:

- the [Department of Health \(England\)](#);
- the [Cochrane Collaboration](#); and
- the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

It also follows style guidelines from:

- the [Royal National Institute for Blind People \(RNIB\)](#);
- the [Information Standard](#);
- the [Patient Information Forum](#); and
- the [Plain English Campaign](#).

Disclaimer

We have made every effort to give accurate information in this leaflet, but there may still be errors or omissions. BAUS cannot accept responsibility for any loss from action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

IMPORTANT

Only a doctor can make a positive (or negative) diagnosis for you. If you find something abnormal in your scrotum or a testicle, do not delay; see your GP or practice nurse as soon as possible.

PLEASE NOTE

The staff at BAUS are not medically trained, and are unable to answer questions about the information provided in this leaflet. If you do have any questions, you should contact your GP, urologist or specialist nurse.