

# Testicular self-examination (TSE)

## Why bother with TSE?

Although testicular cancer is rare, it is the most common cancer in men between the ages of 15 and 34 years.

With early detection and recent advances in chemotherapy, testicular cancer is one of the most easily cured cancers. Some patients are only diagnosed after the tumour has well and truly spread into the body, but even these patients can respond well to modern treatment.

For young men at risk it is useful to carry out TSE with the same regularity as women carry out breast self-examination. The examination is necessary for the early detection and for the successful treatment of cancer. Any delay in the diagnosis should be avoided. TSE might be a life-saving health habit especially if the following issues of past history apply:

- a family history of testicular cancer
- testicular atrophy (e.g. mumps, trauma)
- delayed repair of undescended testes
- previous testicular cancer.

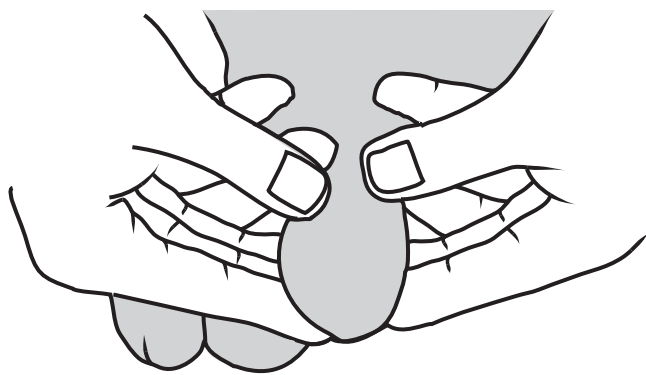
There is no evidence to recommend that it is necessary for all men to carry out screening by TSE.

## What are the causes of testicular cancer?

They are not exactly known, but some factors that may lead to it are an undescended testicle, trauma (injury), heat exposure and heredity.

## What are the symptoms?

The usual symptoms of testicular cancer include a lump on the testicle, painless swelling and a dull ache or heavy dragging sensation in the lower abdomen, groin or scrotum. The early symptoms are therefore mild and tend to be overlooked.



TSE technique

## How to do TSE

Testicular self-examination is a simple procedure which is useful for young men to learn. Examination is best done using two hands, as illustrated.

- Explore each testicle individually.
- Using both hands, gently roll the testicle between the thumbs and fingers. If pain is experienced, too much pressure is being applied.

The examination should be done about once a month, preferably after a warm bath or shower, when the scrotal skin is most relaxed.

## What to look for

A normal testicle is egg-shaped, fairly firm to touch and should be smooth and free of lumps. When you examine the testicles, you should feel for any changes in size, shape or consistency. If you do find something abnormal, most likely it will be an area of firmness or small lump on the front or on the side of the testicle.

Do not confuse the *epididymis* (the soft tube-like structure at the back of the testicle) with a tumour. If you do find something abnormal, you should see a doctor as soon as possible. However, remember that not all lumps are due to cancer.



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