

## Testicular Cancer

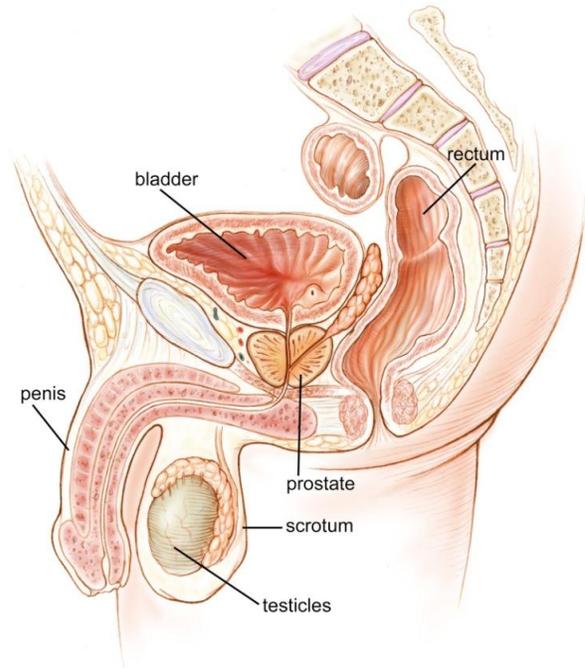
### The Testicles

The testicles (also called the testes), both slightly smaller than a golf ball, are a part of the male reproductive system. The testicles are contained in a sac of skin called the scrotum, which hangs beneath the penis.

The testicles produce the male hormones, one of which is testosterone. These hormones control the development of the reproductive organs and male characteristics. The testicles also produce and store sperm, the male reproductive cells.

### About Cancer

Cancer is a group of many different diseases that have some important things in common. Cancer affects cells, the body's basic unit of life. Normally, cells grow and divide to produce more cells only when the body needs them. This orderly process helps keep the body healthy.



The testicles and surrounding organs

Sometimes, cells keep dividing when the new cells are not needed. These cells form a mass of extra tissue, called a growth or tumor. Tumors can be benign or malignant.

- Benign tumors are not cancer. They often can be removed and in most cases, they do not come back. Most important, benign tumors are rarely a threat to life.
- Malignant tumors are cancer. Malignant tumor cells are abnormal and divide without control or order. These cancer cells can invade and destroy the tissues around them. Cancer cells can break away from a malignant tumor and enter the bloodstream or the lymphatic system. This process is the way cancer spreads from the original (primary) tumor to form new tumors in other parts of the body.

### Testicular Cancer

Testicular cancer is a disease in which malignant cells form in the tissue of one or both testicles.

The testicles contain several types of cells, each of which may develop into one or more types of cancer. It is important to distinguish these types of cancers from one another because they differ in their prognosis and in the ways they are treated. If detected early, testicular cancer is a highly treatable and usually curable form of cancer. Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men 20 to 35 years old.

## **Treatment**

Your doctor will recommend a treatment based on the type of testicular cancer you have, as well as on the stage of your disease. Some treatments are standard, which are the currently used treatments, and some are being tested in clinical trials. Before starting treatment, patients may want to think about taking part in a clinical trial.

A treatment clinical trial is a research study meant to help improve current treatments or obtain information on new treatments for patients with cancer. When clinical trials show that a new treatment is better than the standard treatment, the new treatment may become the standard treatment.

Choosing the most appropriate treatment is a decision that ideally involves the patient, family and health care team.

### **Types of Standard Treatment**

#### **Surgery**

The surgery to remove the testicle and some of the lymph nodes is called a radical inguinal orchiectomy. If surgery to remove the testicle is your best treatment option, your doctor will discuss the procedure with you.

#### **Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses drugs to stop the growth of cancer cells, either by killing the cells or by stopping them from dividing.

In some cases, patients receive chemotherapy after surgery to kill any cancer cells that are left. Treatment given after surgery, to increase the chances of a cure, is called adjuvant therapy.

#### **Radiation Treatment**

Radiation treatment uses high-energy X-rays or other types of radiation to kill cancer cells or keep them from growing. There are two types of radiation. External radiation therapy uses a machine outside the body to send radiation toward the cancer. Internal radiation therapy uses a radioactive substance sealed in needles, seeds, wires or catheters that are placed directly into or near the cancer. The way the radiation treatment is given depends on the type and stage of the cancer being treated.

New types of treatment are tested in clinical trials. Ask your doctor if a clinical trial is available for your type of cancer.