How testicular cancer is diagnosed

See a GP if you notice a swelling, lump or any other change in one or both of your testicles. Your GP will talk to you about your symptoms and examine you. They will refer you to a specialist in a hospital if they think you need more tests. A Urologist is a doctor who specialises in treating problems with the testicles. At the hospital, the specialist doctor will examine you and ask you about your health and your family's health. Tests you may have include an ultrasound of the testicle and blood tests. Blood tests can check your general health as well as check for three tumour markers made by the cancer cells. Not all testicular cancers make these chemicals. You could have testicular cancer without raised marker levels. Other conditions can raise tumour marker levels too. Ultrasound scans use high frequency sound waves to create a picture of a part of the body. You may also require a CT scan and/or an MRI scan to provide more detailed information and to check if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

How testicular cancer can affect sex life and fertility (ability to father children)

Most people are able to resume a normal sex life after having testicular cancer. You will need time to get over surgery, or any other treatment if required. The loss of a testicle may embarrass a young man. For this reason a testicular prosthesis (false testicle) can be placed in the scrotum at the time of surgery to remove the cancerous one. Having one testicle removed shouldn't affect your long term fertility, sex drive or sexual performance. The effect on your fertility will depend on what treatment you require. Your doctor will offer you the option to collect and store sperm (sperm banking) before you start treatment. This is a way of storing your sperm for use later. Chemotherapy for testicular cancer causes temporary infertility in most men who have it. Usually fertility goes back to normal some months after the chemotherapy ends but for some men it doesn't recover.

What is the treatment for testicular cancer

A team of health professionals (multidisciplinary team) decides your treatment plan. Surgery to remove your testicle is usually the first treatment for testicular cancer. After surgery you might need further treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy. You might need another operation to remove lymph nodes from the back of your tummy (abdomen). The results of modern treatment for testicular cancer are excellent even in those patients where the cancer has spread outside the testicle to other parts of the body.

For further information, visit www.mariekeating.ie

About the Marie Keating Foundation

Following their mother Marie's death from breast cancer in 1998, the Keating family promised to provide the people of Ireland with vital information, advice and support on the signs and symptoms of cancer and help to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. The Marie Keating Foundation was established in her memory and with this central ambition in mind.

The Foundation's mission is to make cancer less frightening by enlightening and our aim is to live in a world free from the fear of cancer.

Today, the Marie Keating Foundation are one of the leading voices in Ireland for cancer prevention, awareness, and support. We are committed to being there for people diagnosed with cancer, and their families at every step of this cancer journey, and our services reflect that. Through our information and support services, we reach thousands of people a year, giving education, information and advice focused on cancer prevention and early detection, as well as providing support services and financial assistance to those living with and beyond cancer.

For more information on Ireland's most common cancers or to engage with our support services visit www.mariekeating.ie

The Marie Keating Foundation has best-of-class corporate governance structures having continuously achieved the 'Triple Lock' standard for best practice governance in the charity sector and were awarded the Good Governance award in 2021.

"On February 2nd, 1998, our mother Marie died from breast cancer. At the time and all through her illness, we could do nothing to help our Mother who had, all our lives, done everything for us. We, the Keating family have set up this charity in her name to try to help and prevent others going through what Mam went through and what we are still going through to this day. This is also to show that such a wonderful mother and person did not die in vain."

Take care,

Marie Keating
FOUNDATION

Unit 9, Millbank Business Park,
Lucan, Co. Dublin
T +353 1628 3726 F +353 1628 3759
E info@mariekeating.ie

www.mariekeating.ie

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Testicular Cancer

What you should know

Marie Keating
FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

Testicular Cancer

the facts

- **Testicular cancer is a relatively rare disease**
- **However, it is the most common cancer in men aged 15 to 44**
- **Testicular cancer is almost always curable**
- **The disease responds well to treatment even if it has spread to other parts of the body**
- **Trans women can also develop testicular cancer if they haven't had an operation to remove their testicles**

The testicles

The testicles are two small oval shaped organs which hang below the penis in a pouch of skin called the scrotum. They produce sperm and the male hormone testosterone.

Risks and causes of testicular cancer

- **Age**

  Most common in men under 50,

- **Undescended testicles**

  Risk is higher if one or both testicles haven't dropped down,

- **Personal or family history**

  Higher if you or a close family member (such as a father or brother) have had testicular cancer,

- **Ethnicity**

  More common in white men than in other ethnic groups,

- **Low fertility**

  Men who have fertility problems have a higher risk

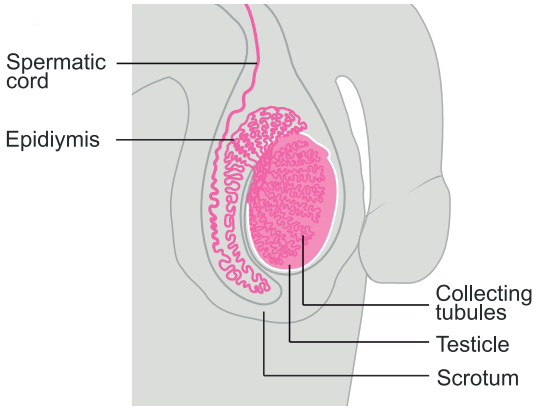
What to look out for

It is important to know what is normal for you so that you can spot any changes. If you notice anything unusual about your testicles, see your G.P. Chances are it won't be cancer, but it's important to get it checked out.

Symptoms may include:

- A painful or enlarged testicle, (larger than is normal for you),
- A painless lump on the testicle,
- A change in the way the testicle feels,
- An unusual difference between one testicle and the other,
- A feeling of heaviness in the scrotum,
- A dull ache in your lower abdomen, groin or back

It is unusual to develop cancer in both testicles at the same time, so if you are wondering whether a testis is normal or not, you can compare it with the other, but you still need to see your GP.



Taken from the patient information website of Cancer Research UK: http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerhelp

How to check yourself

- A good time to examine your testicles is after a warm bath or shower when the muscles in the scrotum are relaxed,
- Stand in front of a mirror and check for any swelling on the skin of your scrotum,
- Hold your scrotum in both hands and note the size and weight of each testicle,
- It is common for one testicle to be slightly larger or to hang lower than the other testicle so don't be alarmed,
- Use both hands to examine each testicle one at a time,
- Gently, but firmly, roll the testicle between your thumb and fingers,
- Check for any lumps, swellings, changes in firmness or anything new for you,
- It's normal to feel a soft tube on the top and back of each testicle. This tube (epididymis) carries the sperm,
- The testicles should be smooth and firm to the touch,
- You shouldn't feel any pain when examining your testicles.

If you notice anything unusual or new for you, see your GP sooner rather than later. It may be nothing but if it is cancer, the earlier it is caught the better. Your GP may need to refer you to a specialist consultant for further investigation.

Don't let embarrassment stop you getting checked!

Self-Examination of Testiculars

Examine each testicle by holding your testicle and rolling it gently but firmly between your fingers.

Look and feel for any hard lumps or nodules(smooth rounded masses) or any change in the size, shape, or consistency.

Be aware there's shouldn't be any pain while performing the self-exam. The testicles should be smooth and firm to the touch.