

# Diagnosing Testicular Cancer - A Quick Guide



## Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Diagnosing testicular cancer' CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Testicular cancer tests
- Removing a testicle
- Further testicular cancer tests
- Questions for your doctor

## Testicular cancer tests

Usually you begin by seeing your GP who refers you to a hospital specialist for tests to see whether you have testicular cancer. At the hospital you will probably have

- An ultrasound scan of your testicles and scrotum
- Blood tests to look for hormones or proteins linked to testicular cancer.

## Removing a testicle

If your ultrasound cannot rule out cancer, you will probably be asked to agree to have your testicle removed. This is called orchidectomy. It is the only way to know for certain whether you have cancer. Cells from the lump must be examined under a

microscope to see if they are cancerous and if so, what type of cancer you have.

In this situation it is not possible to remove some tissue (a biopsy) without taking the whole testicle. Specialists think there is too high a risk of the cancer spreading with a biopsy. They will only remove a testicle when they are fairly sure there is a cancer there. The testicle would have to be removed anyway if cancer was found.

You will have to stay in hospital for a few days. The operation is done under general anaesthetic. A small cut is made in the groin and the testicle is removed whole. If you like, a false testicle (prosthesis) made out of silicone can be put into the scrotum.

**Remember** - removing one testicle does not affect your ability to have an erection or father children.

## Further testicular cancer tests

If the tests show you have testicular cancer, your doctor will want you to have more tests to see if it has spread to any other part of your body. This is called 'staging'.



You may be asked to have

- Blood tests
- Chest X-ray
- Ultrasound of your stomach (abdomen)
- CT scan
- MRI scan

### After your tests

Once you have had the tests you need, the doctor can diagnose the type of cancer, and whether there is any spread of the disease.

It usually takes several days for the results of your tests to be ready. Waiting for your results can be an anxious time. You may find it helpful to talk things over with a close friend or relative. You may want to contact a cancer organisation that can tell you more about counselling and help you to find sources of emotional support in your area.

### What to ask your doctor about diagnosing testicular cancer

- What tests are you going to do?
- Why - what are you looking for?
- After the tests will you know for sure whether I have cancer and if it has spread?
- How long will I have to wait before having the tests?
- Are they painful?
- How should I prepare?
- May I go home right after the tests are done?
- How long do the results take?
- How will I be told about the results?

- Can you do a biopsy instead of removing my testicle?
- Can I have a false testicle (prosthesis) put in during my operation?
- What are the blood tests for?
- What did they show?
- How often will I need blood tests?

### More information

For more information about testicular cancer, visit our website <http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on **0808 800 4040**  
9am till 5pm Monday to Friday