



KAISER PERMANENTE®

Self-Examination of the Testicles

Self-examination of the testicles is a simple procedure for checking the testicles for abnormal lumps that might be a sign of cancer. Cancer of the testicles is rare, but it is most common between the ages of 15 and 34. Men who have an undescended or partly descended testicle run a higher risk of developing cancer of the testicles.

The preferred treatment for cancer of the testicles is most often surgery. In some cases, surgery may be combined with radiation therapy or chemotherapy. If detected early, almost all of the cancer can be eliminated.

The first sign of cancer is usually a small lump, or the enlargement of one testicle. There may be no pain, or there may be a dull ache in the scrotum or groin. There also may be a feeling of dragging or heaviness in the groin or scrotum. Learning how to examine your testicles for possible cancer could save your life. In fact, most cancers of the testicle are discovered by men themselves.

Here's how to perform a simple, three-minute examination of your testicles.

First, do the exam right after a hot bath or shower. The scrotal skin around your testicles is most relaxed at that time, and you can feel the contents more easily. To perform the exam, you should be standing with one leg elevated, perhaps on the side of a bathtub, a toilet seat, or a stool.

Examine each testicle gently with the fingers of both hands. Place your index and middle fingers on the underside of the testicle and your thumb on the top. Gently roll the testicle between thumb and fingers, feeling for a small lump about the size of a pea. Then repeat the process with the other testicle. Also, notice if one testicle is much larger than the other. While it is normal for one testicle to be slightly larger than the other, any major size differences should be reported to your health care professional.

If you find any hard lumps or nodules during your self-exam, you should see your health care professional promptly. The lumps may not be cancerous, but, to be sure, only your health care professional should make that determination. You should also call your health care professional if you have any unexplained pain or swelling in the testicles or scrotum.



For additional health information you can trust:

- Log on to our members-only Web site at www.kaiserpermanente.org/california, then

click the "Kaiser Permanente Members Only" button

- Visit your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center
- Check your Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook
- Listen to the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone messages at 1-800-33 ASK ME (1-800-332-7563)

To get your free Handbook and Healthphone Directory, call 1-800-464-4000.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor or other health care professional.

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REGIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION