

Key Facts - Testicular Cancer

How common is testicular cancer?

Testicular cancer is rare but is a cancer that occurs most in younger men 18-39 years.

What is testicular cancer?

The testicles (two small egg shaped glands in the scrotum) make and store sperm and produce male hormone. There are two types of testicular cancer, seminoma and non-seminoma affecting different cell types.

Symptoms of testicular cancer

- swelling or lump in the testicle, usually painless
- feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- change in the size or shape of the testicle
- feeling of unevenness
- pain or ache in the lower abdomen, the testicle or scrotum
- enlargement or tenderness of breast tissue

How is testicular cancer diagnosed?

- physical examination
- ultrasound - to get a picture
- blood test - for tumour markers (chemicals that some cancers release into the blood)

Treatments

Treatment for testicular cancer is usually very successful and most men can now be cured even if the cancer has spread. Most men have surgery to remove the testicle. Some men will be offered a combination of two or more treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. The treatment depends on the type of testicular cancer and whether or not it has spread. Some men may be closely observed after surgery and only require chemotherapy if spreading is found later.

Reducing your risk of testicular cancer

Causes of testicular cancer are unknown. Undescended testicles, even if surgically repaired, or a family history of testicular cancer slightly increase the risk.

For more detailed information please contact 0800 CANCER (226 237) or visit the Cancer Society website www.cancernz.org.nz

This Key Fact Sheet was written in July 2008 by the Cancer Society of New Zealand. Key Fact Sheets are reviewed every two years with the help of cancer experts and the public.