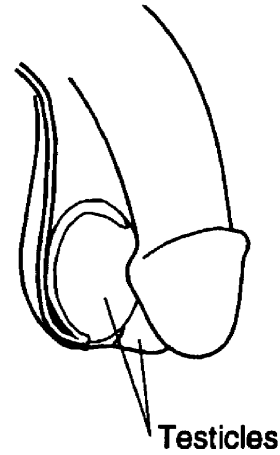


# Testicular Self-Examination (TSE)

## What are Testicles?

Testicles are the male reproductive organs. They produce and store sperm. They also produce testosterone, the male hormone that causes men to have facial hair and a lower voice. Testicles are smooth, oval-shaped and firm to the touch. The testicles normally move from the abdomen into the scrotum (sac) before birth. Parents should have their infant sons checked by the doctor to make sure the testicles are in the scrotum. If they are not, surgery can easily be done to correct this problem.



## Why do a Testicular Self-Exam?

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men ages 20 to 35. It can occur anytime after the age of 15. It is a very curable cancer if found and treated early.

## Who has a risk of getting Testicular Cancer?

White men are 4 times more likely to get testicular cancer than black men. Men whose testicles have not gone into the scrotum are also at greater risk for testicular cancer.

## What are the symptoms of a Testicular Problem?

Men must be familiar with their testicles, so that any changes will be found early. Symptoms that may indicate a problem with the testicles include:

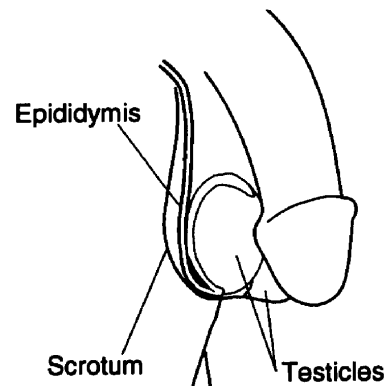
- A lump
- Pain in the testicle
- A change in the size of one of the testicles
- A feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- A feeling of fluid

These signs may also be caused by an infection or other problems that are not cancer.

## How is a Testicular Self-Exam done?

Do testicular self-exam once a month after a warm bath or shower. The heat causes the scrotal skin to relax, making it easier to feel anything unusual.

- Stand in front of a mirror. Check for any swelling on the scrotal skin.
- Examine each testicle gently with both hands. The index and middle fingers should be placed under the testicle while the thumbs are placed on top. Roll the testicles gently between the thumbs and fingers. One testicle may feel longer than the other, this is normal. Feel for changes in the testicles that were not there before.
- The epididymis is cord-like and can be felt on the top and back of the testicles. It stores and moves sperm and it may be tender to the touch. It is the location of most non-cancerous problems. Do not confuse the epididymis with a lump.



## What do I do if a lump is found?

If you feel a lump, call your doctor. Not all lumps are cancer, and some can be caused by infection. Your doctor will decide what type of treatment is needed, if any. Testicular cancer almost always occurs in only one testicle and the other testicle is all that is needed for full sexual function. Regular testicular self-exams are important. Your doctor also should do an exam of your testicles when your yearly physical is done.

**If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**

© Copyright, (12/2005)  
Department of Nursing  
The Ohio State University Medical Center

- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191.