

# TESTICULAR SELF EXAM (TSE)

## TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

# 1.2

### WHY PERFORM TSE?

Cancer of the testes is a relatively rare form of cancer, accounting for approximately one percent of cancers in American men. The great majority of these cancers, however, occur in males between the ages of 19 and 44.

Performing self-examination helps you to become familiar with what is normal for you. Then, if you notice a change, you will be alerted to notify your health care provider. Early diagnosis is important because testicular cancer is highly treatable when found early.

### HOW TO PERFORM TSE

1. TSE should be done once a month during or after a warm bath or shower, when the heat causes the scrotal skin to relax, making it easier to find anything unusual. The procedure is simple and takes only a few minutes.

2. Examine each testicle gently with both hands. Place your index and middle fingers underneath the testicles, your thumbs on top. Roll each testicle separately and gently between the thumbs and fingers, checking for lumps or irregularities.

3. Find the epididymis (cord-like structure, on the top and back of each testicle, which stores and carries sperm). Do not confuse the epididymis with an abnormal lump. The most common tumor to feel for is about the size of a pea, on the front or side of the testicle. These lumps are usually painless.

4. After your shower, stand naked in front of a mirror and look for any swelling in the skin of the scrotum or unusual contours in the groin. One testical usually hangs lower than the other. It is common for one testical to be larger than the other. **Call your doctor if you feel or see something unusual.**

### RISK FACTORS

One of the main risk factors for testicular cancer is undescended testes (testes, that fail to descend into the scrotum.) It can be easily corrected by surgery, however, and if done at an earlier age, the risk of cancer is reduced. Although physical injury to the testes has sometimes been associated with testicular cancer, it may just be that the injury prompted the person to have the testes checked, leading to a diagnosis of an already existing tumor, rather than actually causing the cancer.

### NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- a hard lump, about the size of a pea, is found
- you notice painless swelling and/or a feeling of heaviness in the groin area or scrotum
- the mildest symptoms should be checked by a health care provider



References: Griffith's Instructions for Patients, 7th Edition  
American Cancer Society, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

## Student Health Center

## WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

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## 618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.