

Why is it important to do routine testicular self-examinations?

Regular examination of the testicles should be a routine part of the health program of every adult male. The main reason for this suggestion is that cancer of the testicles is one of the more common tumors that occur in men, particularly between the ages of 20 and 40.

All males should learn self-examination during puberty and make a point of checking themselves each month. Only by learning the normal anatomy of the testicles will they be able to detect any changes that might occur.

The exam should be done in a comfortable position. Some men prefer to check themselves in the shower or bathtub. The shape and position of the testicle should be inspected. On the outside or lateral surface is a groove, called the lateral sulcus. It can be felt between the testicle and epididymitis which connects to it. The testis normally feels firm but not too hard.

When should I be concerned?

Areas of the testicle which feel very hard or tender may be due to a growth (tumor) which can sometimes be cancer. When found these should be checked promptly by a urologist. Most testicular cancers are curable when discovered early.

Pain in the testicle may be due to injury, infection, or tumor, but the most immediate worry is torsion. This is twisting of the testicle which causes acute pain and swelling. If the twist is complete and unreleased, the testicle's blood supply will be blocked and the testicle will die. In some cases the twisting is

intermittent. All cases of acute testicular pain should be seen by a urologist urgently.

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