

Testicular Self-Examinations

It's very important for your doctor to examine your testicles at least once a year. When doing so, your doctor will grasp one testicle at a time, rolling it gently between his or her thumb and first finger to feel for lumps and also checking whether the testicle is hardened or enlarged.

The doctor also will explain how to do testicular self-exams. Learning how to examine yourself at least once a month for any lumps or bumps on your testicles is very important. A tumor (growth or bump) on the testicles could be cancer.

Knowing how your testicles feel when they're healthy will help you know when something feels different and possibly abnormal down there. Noticing any new testicular lumps or bumps as soon as possible gives the best chances for survival and total cure if it turns out to be cancer.

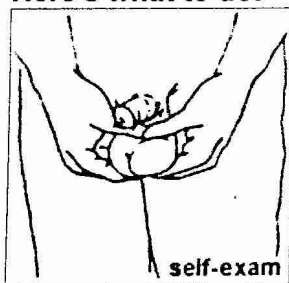
Finally, keep in mind that even though it might feel weird to have a doctor checking out your testicles, it's no big deal to him or her. Sometimes when a doctor is examining that area, you might get an erection — this is something you can't control. It's a normal reaction that happens frequently during genital exams on guys. If it happens, it won't upset or bother the doctor, so there's no need to feel embarrassed.

How to Perform a Testicular Self-Examination

The **testicular self-examination (TSE)** is an easy way for guys to check their own testicles to make sure there aren't any unusual lumps or bumps — which can be the first sign of testicular cancer.

It's important to try to do a TSE every month so you can become familiar with the normal size and shape of your testicles, making it easier to tell if something feels different or abnormal in the future.

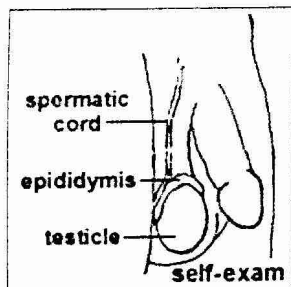
Here's what to do:



It's best to do a TSE during or right after a hot shower or bath. The scrotum (skin that covers the testicles) is most relaxed then, which makes it easier to examine the testicles.

Examine one testicle at a time. Use both hands to gently roll each testicle (with slight pressure) between your fingers.

Place your thumbs over the top of your testicle, with the index and middle fingers of each hand behind the testicle, and then roll it between your fingers.



You should be able to feel the epididymis (the sperm-carrying tube), which feels soft, rope-like, and slightly tender to pressure, and is located at the top of the back part of each testicle. This is a normal lump.

Remember that one testicle (usually the right one) is slightly larger than the other for most guys — this is also normal.

When examining each testicle, feel for any lumps or bumps along the front or sides. Lumps may be as small as a piece of rice or a pea.

If you notice any swelling, lumps, or changes in the size or color of a testicle, or if you have any pain or achy areas in your groin, let your doctor know right away.

Lumps or swelling may not be cancer, but they should be checked by your doctor as soon as possible. Testicular cancer is almost always curable if it is caught and treated early.