

APRIL IS TESTICULAR CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

BY: Melissa Jeremiah, RN, CHCE

Director of Operations at Hoosier Uplands Home Health and Hospice

Although testicular cancer is not common, it can be treated and usually cured, if found early. Testicular cancer generally occurs between ages 20 and 54. A man has a 1 in 270 chance of getting testicular cancer, and a 1 in 5,000 chance of dying from testicular cancer.

What can you do to increase your odds of finding testicular cancer at an early stage? You should perform a testicular self-exam monthly, after reaching puberty. Most men with testicular cancer have no risk factors.

How do I perform a self-exam? The best time to do the self-exam is after a shower, when the skin is relaxed. You should check one testicle at a time. Hold the testicle between your thumbs and fingers of both hands and roll it gently between your fingers. Look and feel for any hard lumps or smooth rounded bumps or changes in the size, shape or consistency of the testicles.

What should I report to my health care provider? Any changes that you notice when doing your monthly self-exam. The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a painless lump on a testicle. Some men complain of a heavy or aching feeling in their lower belly or scrotum. The testicle may also be enlarged or swollen without a lump.

Who has an increased risk of testicular cancer? 9 out of 10 cancers occur in men aged 20 – 54, white men are 5 times more at risk than black men, men with an undescended testicle, family history of testicular cancer, past history of testicular cancer, past history of testicular biopsy when being tested for infertility, men with HIV infection and tall men.

The ACS website was used when researching this article, www.cancer.org.