

Patients I think I might have...

Testicular Lump

Quick Links

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- What should I expect when I visit my GP?
- What could have caused my testicular lump?
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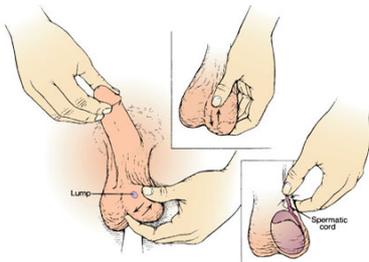


Pages in this section contain graphic images (including genitalia) that some may find upsetting.

What should I do if I have a testicular lump?

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If you find a lump inside the scrotum, not arising from the skin of the scrotum itself, you should contact your GP immediately for further advice



To feel for testicular lumps, it is best to examine yourself when you are warm and relaxed (e.g. after a bath or shower). Stand in front of a mirror and hold each testicle in turn between your fingers. Feel the body of the testicle and all the structures attached to it.

 [Download an information sheet on testicular self-examination](#)

If your GP is concerned that you could have [testicular cancer](#), you may be referred urgently to the urology department using the fast-track (*2-week wait*) referral system.

lumps?

What are the facts about testicular

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- The vast majority of swellings in the scrotum are benign and should not give cause for concern;
- Benign swellings in the scrotum only require surgical treatment if they cause significant symptoms (e.g. aching, cosmetic embarrassment);
- A simple ultrasound scan will usually differentiate between benign and cancerous swellings;
- If the lump is attached to the surface of the testicle, it is probably benign;
- If a lump is within the body of the testis itself, there is a 90% chance that it is a [testicular cancer](#);
- [Testicular cancer](#) is the commonest malignant tumour in men between 20 and 50 years old;
- Whilst [testicular cancer](#) is rare in men over the age of 50, certain forms do occur and you should always seek advice from your GP;
- [Testicular cancer](#) is commoner in abnormal testicles e.g. previously undescended testicles, testicles which have been injured or infected and soft, atrophic testicles (sometimes seen in infertile men); and
- Early diagnosis and treatment mean that more than 95% of men can be cured of [testicular cancer](#), even if it has spread beyond the testicle itself.

What should I expect when I visit my GP?

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Your GP should work through a recommended scheme of assessment for patients with a scrotal swelling. This will normally include some or all of the following:

1. A full history

2. A physical examination

3. Additional tests

What could have caused my testicular lump?

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Swellings of the scrotum are usually cystic (fluid-filled), inflammatory or solid. Clinical examination and ultrasound scanning can usually differentiate between the possible causes

Cystic (fluid-filled) swellings

These are the commonest swellings and are usually caused by a [hydrocele](#) (fluid around the testicle, pictured), a cyst in the [epididymis](#) (sperm-carrying mechanism) or varicose veins above the testicle (a [varicocele](#)). They are all benign and only require treatment if they cause significant symptoms.



Inflammatory swellings

Infection of the [epididymis](#) (sexually-acquired or secondary to a urinary infection), twisting of the testicle (torsion, usually in children) or infection of the testicle itself (e.g. due to mumps) are the commonest causes of inflammation.

Solid swellings

Solid swellings include tuberculosis & syphilis (both very rare nowadays), a sperm granuloma or nodule (usually following a previous vasectomy), chronic inflammation of the [epididymis](#). If the lump is within the testicle itself, it may be a testicular tumour.

 [Download a leaflet about chronic inflammation of the epididymis](#)

Hernias

A hernia arising in the groin can extend down towards the testicle but simple examination will reveal that the swelling does not arise from the scrotum itself. Urologists do not treat hernias and your GP may recommend referral to a hernia surgeon.

What treatments are available for this problem?

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Cystic (fluid-filled) swellings

[Hydrocele](#) repair, excision of an epididymal cyst (pictured) and open surgery, laparoscopic surgery or radiological [embolisation](#) may be needed for significant symptoms from the swelling. Otherwise, no treatment is necessary.

Download leaflets on  [hydrocele repair](#) or on  [excision of an epididymal cyst](#)

Download leaflets on [varicocele](#) treatment by  [open surgery](#),  [keyhole \(laparoscopic\) surgery](#) or

 [radiological embolisation](#)



Inflammatory swellings

[Antibiotics](#) are used for infection of the [epididymis](#). Your GP may refer you to a urologist (if you are over 50 or have a urinary infection) or to a genitomedical clinic (if you are young or your infection may be sexually-acquired). Testicular involvement with mumps usually requires no specific treatment apart from painkillers. Suspected torsion of the testis requires emergency admission and immediate surgery.

 [Download a leaflet about treatment of torsion of the testis](#)

Testicular cancer

If you are found to have [testicular cancer](#), you will be referred urgently to the urology clinic. Following further investigations (see *above*), you will normally be advised to have the testicle removed as soon as possible. An artificial testicle (pictured) can be inserted at the same time or at a later date.

 [Download a leaflet about removal of the testicle for cancer](#)



 [Download a leaflet about insertion of an artificial testicle](#)



The need for further treatment (radiotherapy or [chemotherapy](#)) is determined by the pathology results, the results of your tumour marker blood tests & the findings on a CT scan. Once surgery has been arranged, you will be referred to an oncologist for any further treatment and for long-term follow-up.

Other solid swellings

Tuberculosis and syphilis are rarely seen nowadays but are treated with appropriate [antibiotics](#). Sperm granulomas in the [epididymis](#) may be removed if they are uncomfortable but they do not always require treatment.

 [Download a leaflet about removal of the epididymis](#)

More resources on Testicular Lump

Some/all of these resources are links to external sites, the content on which BAUS accepts no responsibility for.

[Everyman \(Testicular & Prostate Cancer\)](#) 

The website for further information about testicular and prostate cancer

[Orchid](#) 

The website devoted to fighting male cancers

[Macmillan](#) 

Information about living with a diagnosis of testicular cancer

[Medline Plus](#) 

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