

Appendix C

Testicular Cancer Facts

Testicular Cancer Facts

Rates and Statistics

- Approximately 3,000 cases of testicular cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States.
- Overall incidence in the United States is 2 per 100,000 males.
- Testicular cancer accounts for about 2% of all cancers in men.
- Testicular cancer is the most common type of cancer in men between ages 29 and 35, and is the third most common cancer (after leukemia and Hodgkin's disease) in men between ages 20 and 40. It is rare in middle-aged or older men.
- Ninety-five percent of testicular tumors are malignant.
- Testicular cancer is 10 to 40 times more likely to occur when the testes descend to the scrotum after age 6 or never descend.

High-Risk Factors

The exact cause of testicular cancer is still unknown, but men in one or more of the following categories seem more susceptible than others:

- Men who have or have had an undescended testicle, especially if it occurred after age 6
- Men who have atrophy (decrease in size) of the testicle from mumps or a viral infection
- Men who have a twin, brother, or other family member who has or has had a testicular tumor
- Men who have or have had trauma to the testes (some service providers believe that this may influence the development of testicular tumors)
- Men who have or have had endocrine system abnormalities, such as elevated hormone levels (pituitary gonadotropin hormone or androgens)

Types of Testicular Tumors

Testicular tumors are classified into four main types, according to their microscopic appearance. They may occur alone or in combination, and they account for approximately 87% of all testicular tumors. The four main types of testicular tumors are as follows:

- **Seminoma.** This is a slow-growing type of tumor that accounts for 40% of occurrences of testicular cancer.
- **Teratocarcinoma.** This is a **combination type** of tumor, accounting for about 25% of cases of testicular cancer.
- **Embryonal carcinoma.** This is a rapidly growing type of tumor that tends to spread early and accounts for 15% to 20% of occurrences of testicular cancer.

- **Choriocarcinoma.** This type of tumor is responsible for only about 2% of cases of testicular cancer.

Source: Schnare, 1998.

Signs of Testicular Cancer

- In 65% of cases, a small, hard lump, which is usually painless, on the front or side of the testicle (not involving the scrotal wall or the spermatic cord)
- Sometimes, a diffusely firm and enlarged testicle
- A sudden accumulation of fluid or blood in the scrotum (**cystocele** or hematocele)
- A heavy feeling in the testicle
- Pain or discomfort in the genital area
- Swelling or tenderness in the breast (gynecomastia)
- Enlarged lymph nodes

Detection of Testicular Cancer

To help detect testicular cancer at an early stage, clients should:

- Perform monthly genital self-examinations. This procedure is most helpful when performed after a bath or shower, when the scrotal skin and muscles are most relaxed.
- Gently examine each testicle with the fingers of *both* hands, rolling the testicle between the thumbs and fingers to check for lumps.
- Have an annual physical examination performed by a service provider; this should include a thorough genital examination. If the provider does not perform a genital examination as part of the physical examination, the client should request one.
- Report any unusual symptoms to a service provider immediately.

In addition, parents should check their male infants to make sure that both testes have descended into the scrotum.