

Many men ignore testicular cancer symptoms for months

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(HealthDay)—Early detection and treatment of testicular cancer is key to beating the disease, a urology specialist says.

Yet many men who feel something abnormal in a [testicle](#) wait a few months before seeing a doctor.

But, when diagnosed while still confined to the testicle, the five-year survival rate for [testicular cancer](#) is 99 percent, Dr. Jay Raman, chief of urology at Penn State Medical Center said in a university news release.

"I think part of it is the [macho man](#) complex—that everything is fine. Then you add on top of that the fact that it is a sensitive area, and they may have some embarrassment about it," Raman said.

Men who know about testicular cancer may also be concerned that [surgical removal](#) of the testicle is the best way to cure the disease.

"So they wait to see if it gets better on its own. But

sometimes they wait and wait, until they've waited too long," Raman said.

About 9,000 new cases of testicular cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States, according to Raman. Risk factors include being white and having a testicle that didn't descend when younger. Since these [risk factors](#) are not preventable, the best thing to do is be aware of the risk and know the symptoms of cancer.

All men should do a testicular self-exam at least every six months, Raman advised.

"What you are feeling for is that both testicles have the same contours—relatively smooth and soft, kind of the consistency of a hard-boiled egg or the palm of your hand," he said. "If you notice anything firm, or lumps or bumps—something that is different on one side than the other—you should seek medical attention right away."

Surgery to remove the testicle is the most common treatment. If the cancer is confined to the testicle, exams and blood work may be the only follow-up patients require. If the cancer has spread beyond the testicle, chemotherapy and radiation may be necessary, he explained.

"The most important thing to know is that cure rates are directly tied to how early you find it," Raman said.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [testicular cancer](#).

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