



CANCERcare®

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fact sheet

AFTER A TESTICULAR CANCER DIAGNOSIS: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

A diagnosis of testicular cancer can leave you and your loved ones feeling uncertain, anxious and overwhelmed. As your health care team talks about your diagnosis and treatment, ask questions about anything you don't understand. Good communication with your doctor will help improve the quality of the care you receive. It's a good idea to bring a list of questions to the appointment and write down the doctor's responses. In addition, if possible, bring someone with you to any appointment; another set of ears can help reduce confusion.

QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

Since I've been diagnosed, I've been overwhelmed. How can I better cope with my diagnosis? A cancer diagnosis turns a person's world upside down emotionally and physically. Your team of doctors, nurses and social workers are valuable sources of support as you cope with a cancer diagnosis. Oncology social workers are licensed professionals who counsel people affected by cancer, providing emotional support and helping people access practical assistance. CancerCare's oncology social workers provide individual counseling, support groups and locate services face-to-face, online or on the telephone, free of charge. To learn more, visit www.cancercare.org or call 800-813-HOPE (4673).



What type of testicular cancer do I have? Testicular cancer occurs when the cells found in the testicles (also called the testes) begin to change and grow uncontrollably, forming a tumor (also called a nodule), which can be either cancerous or benign. The two main types of testicular cancer are seminomas and non-seminomas.

What stage is my tumor? A tumor's stage refers to its size and extent of spread in the body—e.g., whether it has spread to lymph nodes or other organs. Cancer that has spread to other organs is called metastatic cancer. A cancer's stage is often denoted by a Roman numeral (I, II, III or IV). The higher the numeral, the more the cancer has spread within the body.

What is my recommended treatment plan? Your doctor may recommend you consulting with a urologist (a surgeon who specializes in treating diseases of the urinary system and male reproductive system) before starting treatment. Depending on the information that your health care team has learned about your tumor, your treatment options may include surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

What side effects can I experience throughout my treatment plan? Keep in mind that side effects can vary from person to person, and can

(over)

be treated by your health care team. A key to managing side effects is to be aware of them and communicate with your health care team when they arise. Report them right away—don't wait for your next appointment. Your health care team can help you cope with side effects of testicular cancer treatment. To help you get relief from side effects, your doctors and nurses need to know specific details about your symptoms. By keeping a side effect journal and bringing it with you to medical appointments, you can have this kind of information ready to share with them. Some of the things you may want to write down in your journal include:

- How long a side effect lasts
- The date and time a side effect occurs
- What impact the side effect has on your daily activities. For example—does pain keep you from sleeping?
- How strong the side effect is. For example—if you experience pain, how strong is it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 equals no pain and 10 is the worst pain possible?

Read CancerCare's fact sheet titled, "The Value of Assertiveness When Talking to Your Doctor" for more information on communicating with your health care team.

How does this diagnosis affect my fertility?

Some cancer treatments may affect a man's fertility (the ability to have a child) or hormone levels. Talk to your health care team about all of your treatment options and the long-term effects. For information on fertility, read CancerCare's "Coping With Fertility Concerns: Finding Resources and Support" fact sheet.

CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by professional oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit www.cancercares.org or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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How will testicular cancer affect my ability to be intimate?

The physical impact of cancer and cancer treatments can affect how you relate to a romantic partner. While some people find it difficult to bring up intimacy concerns with their doctor, being open about the physical or emotional difficulties you are experiencing is the first step in having your concerns appropriately addressed by your medical team. Prepare yourself for any physical changes during treatment by having your doctor explain what these changes may be. Read CancerCare's "Intimacy During and After Cancer Treatment" fact sheet for more information.

Is there a clinical trial I can participate in? If so, will it be covered by my insurance?

Clinical trials are the standard by which we measure the worth of new treatments and the quality of life of patients as they receive those treatments. For this reason, doctors and researchers urge people with cancer to take part in clinical trials. Read CancerCare's "Clinical Trials: What You Need to Know" fact sheet to learn more about clinical trials.



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