Understanding testicular cancer: Caring for people with cancer
This booklet has been written to help you understand testicular cancer. It has been prepared and checked by cancer doctors, other relevant specialists, nurses and patients. The information in this booklet is an agreed view on this cancer, its diagnosis and management, and the key aspects of living with it.

If you are a patient, your doctor or nurse may wish to go through the booklet with you and mark sections that are important for you. You can also make a note below of the contact names and information that you may need quickly.

This booklet has been written to help you understand testicular cancer.
Understanding testicular cancer

What does that word mean?

Abdomen The part of the body that lies between the chest and the hips. Sometimes known as the belly or tummy.

Adjuvant treatment Treatment given soon after surgery when a diagnosis of cancer is made.

Alopecia Loss of hair. No hair where you normally have hair.

Anti-emetic A tablet, injection or suppository to stop you feeling sick or vomiting.

Benign Not cancer.

Bleeding块 of tumour

Chemotherapy Treatment with drugs that cure or control cancer.

Chest

Chemo-therapy

Cells The building blocks that make up your body. They are very small and can only be seen under a microscope.

Cholecystectomy Removal of the gall bladder.

Diabetes A long-term condition where your body has trouble using sugar as fuel.

Diagnosis The decision that is made when a test result is known.

Diuretic A medicine that helps the body get rid of excess fluid.

Dysmenorrhea Painful periods.

Examination A medical test or inspection.

Fatigue Tiredness.

Gastroenterology The study of the bowel and all its functions.

Gland A small organ that produces and releases hormones or other substances.

Gynaecologist A doctor who specialises in women’s health.

Hypertension High blood pressure.

Immunotherapy Treatment using the body’s own immune system.

Incontinence Loss of control of urination or defecation.

Infection A disease caused by germs or bacteria.

Interventional radiology A type of radiology where X-rays are used to help diagnose or treat a medical condition.

Interventional oncology Treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays.

Onco-hematology The study of cancer and blood diseases.

Orchidectomy Surgical removal of a testicle.

Oncology The study of cancer.

Osteoporosis A condition where bones become fragile.

Pancreatic cancer A cancer that affects the pancreas.

Pathology The study of body tissues and fluids.

Penile cancer Cancer that affects the penis.

Pneumonia An infection of the lungs.

Postmenopausal After the menopause.

Pre-menopausal Before the menopause.

Radiation oncology Treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays.

Radiation therapy The treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays.

Radiation oncologist A doctor who specialises in treating cancer patients using radiotherapy.

Radiotherapy The treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays.

Radium 225 A radioactive isotope used in cancer treatment.

Radium 223 A radioactive isotope used in cancer treatment.

Relapse A return of the signs and symptoms of a disease after the treatment has been successful.

Retinoblastoma A rare type of cancer that affects the retina of the eye.

Splenectomy Removal of the spleen.

Stage of cancer The part of the body that is affected by cancer.

Stage (TNM) The spread of cancer from one part of the body to other tissues and organs.

Staging A series of tests that measure the size and extent of cancer.

Stomach The part of the body that is between the mouth and the small intestine.

Surgery A medical operation.

Symptom A sign or indication of a disease or disorder.

Testicular cancer A cancer that affects the testicles.

Therapy Treatment that involves medicines, surgery, or other methods to help treat a disease.

Thyroid The part of the body that is between the neck and the collarbone.

Tumour A mass of tissue that forms in the body.

Understanding testicular cancer

Introduction

This booklet has been written to help you learn more about testicular cancer. We hope it answers some questions you may have about your condition.

Reading this booklet

You may find that there is a lot of information to take in, especially if you are feeling anxious or worried. Remember that you do not need to read every section. If you do not understand something that has been written, discuss it with your doctor or nurse. You can also call the freefone National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700.

You may want to look at some of the information that is not relevant to your situation.

Reading this booklet

Reading this booklet

Reading this booklet

Reading this booklet
Understanding testicular cancer

Lymph nodes can be found in groups throughout the body such as in the neck, armpits and groin. Sometimes you may become aware of these glands if they become swollen or enlarged. More ... in the chest and abdomen. Other parts of the lymphatic system include the liver, spleen, thymus, tonsils and bone marrow.

The treatment of testicular cancer, even when it has spread to other parts of the body, is usually very successful. It has the highest cure rate of all cancers even when it has spread to other parts of the body.

What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease of the body's cells. In healthy tissue these cells replace or repair damaged cells. Where there is cancer, the cells do not behave as normal and keep on growing even when there is no need.

These abnormal cells can form a tumour. Tumours can be either benign or malignant.

Benign tumours do not spread to other parts of the body so are not cancer. Malignant tumours are made up of cancer cells that can spread from where they started and can go on to damage other tissues and organs where they settle and can spread to other parts of the body. This is called secondary cancer.

Secondary tumours occur somewhere else in the body. This is called metastasis of cancer.

The lymphatic system is one of the body's natural defence systems. It includes a network of tiny tubes called lymphatic vessels that pass through almost all the tissues in the body. These vessels carry a clear watery fluid called lymph. Along the network are lymph nodes. These are bean-shaped glands that filter the lymphatic fluid for foreign particles as it passes through. They also allow white cells called lymphocytes to protect the body against infection.

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developing testicular cancer if your father or brother had the disease. Research has shown that a particular gene is the cause of cancer in some men.

Testicular cancer is more common in white men than African or Asian men. It occurs more commonly in wealthier social groups too. The reasons for this are not known. It is not clear if being exposed to radiation increases the risk of testicular cancer but the risk is small. A vasectomy does not increase the risk of a man developing testicular cancer.

Some men who had a rare complication of mumps called mumps orchitis may develop testicular cancer. But testicular cancer is not infectious and cannot be passed on to other people.

In most cases, the exact cause of testicular cancer is unknown.

What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a painless swelling or lump in one of the testicles. Sometimes the scrotum may feel heavy and appear swollen. Even if you have no pain, you should have any swelling in the testes checked out by a doctor. He or she will need to do an ultrasound of the testicles. Sometimes the tumour can be very small and symptoms are not obvious.

Understanding testicular cancer

The testicles are two small oval-shaped organs that are located below the penis in a pouch of skin called the scrotum. The testes are part of the male reproductive system.

The testes are the site of sperm production and contain the testicular cancer cells. They produce sperm which then travel through the epididymis, where they mature and are stored for later use.

Understanding testicular cancer

The testicles take turns to produce sperm, and this process is called spermatogenesis. Each testicle produces sperm at a different pace, so sperm production is not constant. The amount of sperm produced each day varies depending on factors such as age, health, and lifestyle.

What causes testicular cancer?

In most cases, the exact cause of testicular cancer is unknown. Although it is still a rare cancer, the number of cases has been increasing in recent years. The reasons for this are not known, but research is ongoing into possible causes.

Testicular cancer is more common in men who are under 35 years of age. The reason for this is not known, but research is focusing on genetic and environmental factors.

The testicles take turns to produce sperm, which then travel through the epididymis, where they mature and are stored for later use. The amount of sperm produced each day varies depending on factors such as age, health, and lifestyle.
Understanding testicular cancer

How does the doctor make the diagnosis?
Most men begin by visiting their family doctor. If your doctor has concerns about you, he or she will refer you to a hospital for further tests. At the hospital, the doctor will ask you about your symptoms and your medical history. They will also perform a physical examination to check for any lumps or other abnormalities in your testicles.

Ultrasound of the scrotum and testes
This test is carried out in the X-ray department of the hospital. A small device is placed on your testicles, and sound waves are sent through your body. The sound waves bounce off the structures inside your body, creating a picture that can be used to diagnose any abnormalities.

Surgery
If your doctor suspects that the swelling is cancer, the only way to confirm this is to remove the affected testicle and examine it under a microscope. Removing a piece of the testicle is called a biopsy. This test is done in the X-ray department of the hospital.

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Common symptoms:
- A painless swelling or lump in one of the testicles
- The scrotum may feel heavy
- A painless lump in the side of the neck
- Hormone imbalance – tender nipples or enlarged breast
- Painless lump in the side of the neck
- Headache
- Backache
- Other symptoms:

To sum up

1000 200 700

How does the doctor make the diagnosis?

Few operations or courses of action can take place without your consent.
The surgical removal of a testicle is called an orchiectomy. Your surgeon will admit you to hospital and the operation will be carried out quickly, as it is most important to remove the testicle as soon as possible. If the testicle is removed, the skin over the remaining part of the scrotum will be sewn up. Your doctor will give you painkillers if you need them. Most men can go home 2-3 days after the operation.

If the cancer is confined to the testicle, you may not require any further treatment. However, you will have to attend hospital for regular check-ups, which will include blood tests and scans. The removal of one testicle does not affect your ability to have an erection or father children. This is explained in more detail on page 36. If you are concerned that the loss of a testicle may affect your sexual health, your doctor can discuss other options with you. For example, a testicle (prosthesis) can be placed in your scrotum to give a normal appearance. Your doctor can give you more details.

Further tests

If you have testicular cancer your doctor will want to do other tests. This is known as staging. These extra tests are very important, as they will show if the disease has spread to other parts of the body. The results of the tests will also help to decide on the best treatment for you.

These tests may include:

- Blood tests: Some testicular cancers produce chemicals that are released into the bloodstream. The three main chemicals produced are alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), beta human chorionic gonadotrophin (BHCG) and lactate dehydrogenase (LDH). They are sometimes called blood tumour markers.

- CT scan: This is a special type of X-ray that builds up a detailed picture of the inside of your body. The scan is painless. Your treatment and during the follow-up period, your surgeon and consultant will check the levels of these markers throughout your treatment and during the follow-up period. These levels help to assess the response to treatment. Sometimes, these chemicals make your testicles feel larger. If the cancer is responding these chemicals will go down and for markers that are not affected by treatment, these chemicals may remain at the same level. However, you will need to attend hospital for further check-ups. These tests are very important, as they can show if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

Your surgeon and consultant will do these tests once or more each year.

If the cancer is removed, your scrotum will be a normal appearance. Your doctor can guide you through the process of recovering from the operation. However, you will need to attend hospital for follow-up tests.

The removal of one testicle may affect your ability to have an erection. If the cancer is removed, you may not require any further tests. Your doctor will want to do these tests once or more each year. Your doctor will give you more details.

If your doctor does not think your cancer has spread, you may not need any further tests. However, you will need to attend hospital for regular check-ups for the rest of your life.
Understanding testicular cancer

Treatment and side-effects

After the tests, what about treatment?

Blood tests

CT scan (CAT scan)

Ultrasound

Cheek X-ray

Dependent on the results of this test, you may need:

Side-effects and examining it under a microscope. The type of testicular cancer is diagnosed by removing the affected testicle and examining it under a microscope.

A team of specialists will plan your treatment. The kind of treatment you have will depend on the cell scan.

Surgery is usually the first treatment for testicular cancer. Radiotherapy and chemotherapy may be used alone or together.

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy may make you feel hot all over for a few minutes. Preparation for a CT scan can vary. The doctor or nurse in your hospital will tell you what to do. This test is usually done as an outpatient.

Treatment may make you feel hot all over for a few minutes. Preparation for a CT scan can vary. The doctor or nurse in your hospital will tell you what to do. This test is usually done as an outpatient.
Further surgery

Surgery when initial treatment for testicular cancer is over.

If the tumour has spread to other parts of the body, such as the lymph nodes in the abdomen or the lungs, or you are at a high risk of recurrence, you will need further treatment.

Further surgery is sometimes required after radiotherapy or chemotherapy. This is done to remove any remaining enlarged lymph nodes at the back of the abdomen or under the arms.

If the results of the scan are positive for cancer, the lymph nodes in the abdomen will be removed and examined under a microscope.

Further surgery is sometimes required after radiotherapy or chemotherapy. This is done to remove any remaining enlarged lymph nodes or secondary tumours. Sometimes a PET scan, which is a special kind of X-ray, can show if there is a secondary tumour, which is a special kind of X-ray.

The two main reasons for this are:

1. Testicular cancer can spread to the lymph nodes in the abdomen or to other organs such as the lungs. These secondary tumours or secondary lymph nodes can spread to the lymph nodes in the abdomen

After treatment, even though your doctor feels that you are free from cancer, scans may continue to show suspicious looking areas. Your doctor will talk to you and tell you about your treatment. Some people find it helpful to have another medical opinion to help them decide about their treatment. Doctors can refer you to another specialist if you think that would be helpful.
Understanding testicular cancer

Radiotherapy is a treatment where high energy X-rays are aimed at a cancer. These X-rays cause cell damage to the cancer. The damage to the cancer cells stops the disease from spreading and may cause it to die. Radiotherapy is used to treat seminoma to prevent the disease coming back after surgery, or for disease that has spread to the glands at the back of the abdomen. It is a highly successful treatment, which will cure almost all men with this type of cancer.

Planning your treatment

Before radiotherapy, your radiation oncologist plans how best to deliver your treatment. He or she will decide how much treatment you will receive and over how many weeks. You will be marked on your skin each day so that the radiation can be directed at the correct area. You will have to go to a radiotherapy room each time you go for treatment. The radiation therapist will ask you to lie in a certain position under a radiotherapy machine. The radiation therapist will make sure that you do not make any sudden movements.

The machine called a linear accelerator delivers external radiotherapy. This is known as external radiotherapy. It is usually given as a series of daily treatments over a period of time. You will usually have treatments five days a week for four to eight weeks. During each treatment session, you will be asked to lie on a couch in a certain position. You may be given an injection of a kidney dye, which will show up on X-ray. The dye will clearly show areas to be avoided by the radiation beam. Treatment planning is a very important part of radiotherapy. If you move slightly during treatment, the radiation beam may miss the cancer.

External radiotherapy does not make you radioactive. It is perfectly safe for you to mix freely with family and friends. You can talk to the radiation therapist about any concerns you have about your treatment. The radiation therapist can explain what you will see during your treatment. If you have any questions, you can ask the radiation therapist at any time. They will be happy to answer your questions.

Each time you go for treatment, you will be marked on your skin where you are to get treatment so that the X-rays can be aimed at the same area each day. The X-rays will be delivered through a machine called a linear accelerator. The X-rays are directed at the cancer to cure or control it. It is often used to treat seminoma, but not for non-seminomas. The X-rays are delivered through a machine called a linear accelerator. This is known as external radiotherapy. It is usually given as a series of daily treatments over a period of time. You will usually have treatments five days a week for four to eight weeks. During each treatment session, you will be asked to lie on a couch in a certain position. You may be given an injection of a kidney dye, which will show up on X-ray. The dye will clearly show areas to be avoided by the radiation beam. Treatment planning is a very important part of radiotherapy. If you move slightly during treatment, the radiation beam may miss the cancer.

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Understanding testicular cancer

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You may have some hair loss in and around the pubic area or abdomen. If this happens it will fall out quickly, but try not to worry, as the hair should start to grow again when treatment is over. However the hair may be thinner or finer than it was before. Hair loss treatment may continue for 3-4 weeks depending on chemotherapy.

Will I have any side-effects?
Radiotherapy is the treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays. Treatment can cause discomfort to come for treatment. You will not feel any pain while you are getting each treatment. Each session only takes a few minutes each day. You will not feel any pain while you are getting chemotherapy.

Treatment
The cancer treatment may continue for 3-4 weeks depending on chemotherapy. Each session only takes a few minutes each day. You will not feel any pain while you are getting each treatment.

Will I have any skin changes?
Applying anything to your skin before, during and after radiotherapy may irritate the skin and make it more sensitive. It is important to keep the skin dry and clean. Y our doctor or nurse will explain how these effects can be managed before you start your treatment. Avoid perfumed creams or powders. You may have some hair loss in and around the pubic area or abdomen.

The skin in the treated area may become red and sore. If you need to wash the skin, wash with a soft towel. Do not rub. Avoid very hot baths.

Side-effects
These or any other effects you develop are monitored very carefully during the radiation treatment. Information on how to prevent side-effects and medication will be prescribed if needed. Most of these side-effects should go away when treatment is over. However, some may become permanent.

To sum up
Radiotherapy is the treatment of cancer using high energy X-rays. You will not feel any pain while you are getting each treatment. Each session only takes a few minutes each day. Treatment may continue for 3-4 weeks depending on the cancer.

To speak to one of our nurses about treatment, please call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700 for a copy of the Understanding Radiotherapy booklet.
Understanding testicular cancer

There are many chemotherapy drugs used in the treatment of testicular cancer. The drugs used include cisplatin, etoposide, and bleomycin. These drugs are used in combination with each other to provide optimal treatment for the cancer.
Understanding testicular cancer

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Before your start your treatment, ask your doctor about the side-effects that may occur. Do tell your doctor about the

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Feeling very tired

You may feel very tired during treatment. This tiredness can last for a few days and show you how to use them properly.

If you have diarrhoea, you may need to use more than one mouthwash daily. Your nurse will give you a choice of different mouthwashes.

Tell your doctor or nurse if your mouth feels sore. They can also cause blisters to appear on the tongue and gums.

Some drugs used to treat testicular cancer can cause sore mouth.

Sore mouth

If this side-effect of treatment lasts for more than 7 days, there are tablets that can have diarrhoea more than twice a day. You may also have cramping and/or abdominal pain. If this occurs, it is important to drink lots of clear fluids to replace the fluid you have lost.

Diarrhoea

Try to keep your hands and feet clean and always wash your hands before and after eating and after using the toilet.

Numbness or pins and needles in the hands and feet

Some chemotherapy drugs used to treat cancer may cause tingling or burning sensations in your hands and feet. You may have difficulty picking up small objects or buttoning your shirt or jacket.

Some drugs used to treat testicular cancer can cause numbness or pins and needles in your hands and feet. Your doctor or nurse will give you advice on how to reduce this side-effect.

Technique

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any infections. Wash your hands often during the day, especially before eating and after using the toilet.

Some chemotherapy drugs used to treat testicular cancer can cause numbness or pins and needles in your hands and feet. Your doctor or nurse will give you advice on how to reduce this side-effect.
Understanding testicular cancer

Some of the drugs used to treat testicular cancer may cause infertility. It may be temporary or permanent. See page 36 for more information.

Sex

There is no medical reason why you cannot have sex whilst on chemotherapy. However, you may feel less tired if you can rest between sexual activity. You may also need more time for recovery after sex. You may find talking to your partner before sex helps.

Hair loss (alopecia)

This is a common side-effect of the drugs used in treatment and may cause hair to fall out. If this happens you will need to start wearing a wig or a hat. Your doctor, nurse or medical social worker may advise you on how to deal with this. For more information about wigs or hats, contact the Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700.

Chemotherapy is a treatment using drugs to cure or control cancer.

Chemotherapy, Understanding Chemotherapy. The National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700 for a copy of the booklet, Understanding Chemotherapy and its side-effects, call 1800 200 700 for a copy of the booklet, Understanding Chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy is a treatment using drugs to cure or control cancer.

To sum up you will start to grow your hair when treatment stops.

If you would like a wig it is better to organise this before your hair starts to grow. Your medical social worker or nurse may be able to help you find a wig when this happens. At least two weeks after treatment has ended. It might be a good idea to try a different wig. You might also consider it if this helps with your confidence.

Chemotherapy is a treatment using drugs to cure or control cancer.

Stop sign: Take chemotherapy as directed. It is best to take your tablets, capsules or liquid without food. If you do not feel like eating or you have a poor appetite, eat a light breakfast before chemotherapy. If you feel like eating after chemotherapy, eat something. It is best not to eat anything after chemotherapy.

For more information about chemotherapy and its side-effects, call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700 for a copy of the booklet, Understanding Chemotherapy.
Understanding testicular cancer

When you are asleep a thin needle is passed through the skin into
more reach.

You may need to stay in hospital for several weeks due to infection
are fully recovered from the effects of high-dose chemotherapy.

The chemotherapy is usually given over a couple of days. The

The stem cells are then collected from the bloodstream.

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Understanding testicular cancer

The bone marrow is drawn up through the needle into a syringe and stored until required. It is usually necessary to take bone marrow from different places in both hips to make up the amount needed. The procedure takes about 30-40 minutes to complete. You cannot eat or drink anything for at least 4 hours afterwards. Your hips may feel tender and sore for a few days after the procedure. Ask your nurse for painkillers if you need them.

After high-dose chemotherapy, which is normally given over a few days, the bone marrow is returned by intravenous infusion (drip). The bone marrow can be infused through a central line or a peripheral line. You will also need to know about the side-effects of such treatment. Your doctor or nurse will tell you later.

Before consenting to either of the above treatments make sure you understand why you should have it and what are its chances of success. You will also need to know about the side-effects of treatment. You may need to stay in hospital for several weeks due to infection or other effects of treatment.

Research – what is a clinical trial?

Research into new ways of treating cancer goes on all the time. Doctors can only find new and better ways of treating cancer by using new drugs or new combinations of drugs that are already in use. Many patients with cancer are treated with new drugs in trials which are called clinical trials.

Find out about the Beacon Cancer Research Trials Support Group available to help and support you at this time and throughout treatment. Call 1800 200 700 for more information. There is a Beacon Cancer Research Trials Support Group available to help and support you at this time and throughout treatment. Call 1800 200 700 for more information.
Understanding testicular cancer

Follow-up

Whatever treatment you receive for your cancer, you will have to come back for regular check-ups. In the beginning these are quite often. These visits may include seeing your doctor, having blood tests, X-rays and scans. These check-ups will then allow your doctor to check for signs of testicular cancer and to follow up any ongoing side-effects that you may have. He or she will also be able to check for new side-effects that may develop after the removal of one testicle. The second testicle is where the testicular cancer is whether there is still the risk of recurrence. So these check-ups are most important as they will allow your doctor to check for signs of testicular cancer and to follow up any ongoing side-effects that you may have.

One of the most common questions men ask before treatment for testicular cancer is whether their sex life will be affected. The removal of one testicle will not affect your sexual performance or your ability to have children. If the other testicle is healthy, there will be no effect on your sexual performance or your ability to have children. The second testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle. This is because the remaining testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle. This is because the remaining testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle. This is because the remaining testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle. This is because the remaining testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle. This is because the remaining testicle will produce more testosterone and sperm to make up for the removal of the other testicle.
Many men go on to father normal healthy babies after treatment. Your doctor will talk to you about this in more detail before you start your treatment. If you have a partner, you may find it helpful if you see the doctor together so that you can both talk about your fears and worries.

The prospect of infertility can be difficult to come to terms with. It may help to talk to a family member or a close friend about your concerns. Ask your doctor or nurse for advice on when you should do a semen analysis.

Before your treatment begins, sperm banking can be done at the HARI Unit at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. If the tests show that your sperm count is within normal limits it may be possible to store your sperm and use it after treatment. To do this you will be asked to give sexual penile stimulation for a period of time. If the tests show that your sperm count is within normal limits it is important that you keep this information in mind. You may also want to consider sperm banking before your treatment begins.
Fatigue

Surgery

Radiotherapy

Chemotherapy

Fatigue is something that lots of people complain of from time to time. It can be due to the stress of cancer, but there is sometimes something else going on that can contribute to it. Sometimes the damage is permanent and often described as a common problem of cancer and is often described as an endurance of cancer. People may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions about the treatment. Sometimes the lymph nodes in the pelvis or at the back of the abdomen are still enlarged after treatment. The effect of chemotherapy or endotherpay can affect the body's ability to repair itself and can be permanent. However, the symptoms of fatigue may improve over time. The sensation of orgasm is in a few men and may resolve over time. The sensation of orgasm is a problem with ejaculation (the release of semen). The only way to result is to the sexual organs. This can occur if the problem is becoming less common as men recover from chemotherapy.
If you are still in full-time education think about putting your studies on hold until your treatment is over. Use the extra free time to do something that you especially enjoy.

There is a free booklet on fatigue available. If you would like more information, call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700 for a copy of Coping with Fatigue.

Complementary and alternative therapies

There is great interest today in complementary and alternative treatments for cancer. Some people find them helpful and beneficial during their illness. In many countries they are offered as part of the routine treatment of cancer. Complementary and alternative therapies may be of some help to you. However, they are not intended to replace conventional medical treatment.

Conventional therapies are treatments which doctors use most often to treat people with cancer. These include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and hormones. They are used to treat people with cancer. These include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and hormones. They are used to treat people with cancer.

What you can do

- Treatment may help by relieving symptoms such as pain or nausea.
- Complementary and alternative therapies may be of some help to you. However, they are not intended to replace conventional medical treatment.
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- Complementary and alternative therapies are treatments which doctors use most often to treat people with cancer. These include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and hormones. They are used to treat people with cancer.
Complementary therapies are treatments that are sometimes given together with conventional treatment. They include therapies such as:

- Meditation
- Relaxation
- Visualisation
- Gentle massage
- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology
- Music, art and dance therapy
- Nutrition therapy
- Acupuncture
- Shiatsu
- Yoga
- Hypnotherapy
- Herbalism
- Megavitamin therapy
- Diet therapy
- Meditation therapy

Many people find complementary therapies are very helpful in a number of ways. You may feel more positive about yourself and your illness. You may be better able to cope with the physical side-effects that cancer can bring. Some complementary therapies also focus on the spiritual dimension of a person to aid healing.

There are few scientific studies that have established the benefits of complementary therapies. Some methods can be easily used along with standard medical treatments of your cancer. Other methods should only be used with the advice of your doctor or qualified practitioner.

If you decide to have complementary therapy, it is important to make sure that the practitioner is qualified and has good reputation. Check to see if they belong to a professional association. You also need to ensure that the treatment is being used safely and that it is appropriate for your cancer.

Before you decide to change your treatment or add any alternative therapies, be sure to talk to your doctor or nurse. Some methods can be safely used alongside conventional treatments, but others may not be appropriate. It is important to discuss all your treatment options with your doctor to ensure you are getting the best care possible.

Some complementary therapies are generally not recommended. These therapies include:

- Hyperthermia
- Chelation therapy
- Stem cell transfer
- Gene therapy
- Photodynamic therapy
- Immunotherapy
- Radical therapy
- Hormone therapy

Many doctors do not believe that such therapies can cure or control cancer. If you decide to have complementary therapy, you should discuss this with your doctor to ensure you are getting the best care possible.

Cancer and Complementary Therapies

More information is available in a free booklet from the Irish Cancer Society called Cancer and Complementary Therapies. If you would like a copy or more advice, call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700.
You might feel numb and shocked when you are told that you have cancer. You can feel swamped with many different emotions ranging from disbelief to anger. At first the news may be too much to take in. Later the news may be very hard to come to terms with your illness. Your family and friends may be feeling the same way and need time to get used to it.

Reactions differ from one person to another – there is no right or wrong way to feel.

These worries are understandable, especially if you are young.

I'll never be the same again. I'm not a whole man.

Sense of loss

Reactions differ from one person to another – there is no right or wrong way to feel.

The same way and need time to get used to it.

Because different people may feel differently, it is normal to react in different ways to hearing that you have cancer. Your family and friends may feel similar emotions. However, they are part of the process you must go through in coming to terms with your illness.

Reactions differ from one person to another – there is no right or wrong way to feel.

Understanding and emotions

You might feel numb and shocked when you are told that you have cancer. You can feel swamped with many different emotions.
Understandings about testicular cancer

46

about your concerns, as he or she could help you. Discuss what you have found out with your family and friends, as they are probably worried too.

Denial

'There is nothing really wrong with me.' 'I haven't got cancer.'

Many people cope with their illness by saying that you do. However, if you have turned the doctors and nurses who are caring for you, if you have taken your own choices to you. You might also feel angry towards others who are decisions and you may find it hard to talk about it. If that is the way you feel, then just say quite firmly to the people around you that you would prefer not to talk about your illness, at least for the time being.

Anger

'Why me of all people?' 'And why right now?'

Anger can hide other feelings such as fear or sadness and you may vent your anger on those closest to you. You might also feel angry towards others who are decisions and you may find it hard to talk about it. If that is the way you feel, then just say quite firmly to the people around you that you would prefer not to talk about your illness, at least for the time being.

Fear and uncertainty

'Am I going to die?' 'Will I be in pain?'

Another common fear is that cancer is always painful. This is not true. Some cancers cause no physical pain at all. If you are in pain, there are many things that can control it. Other methods of pain relief include medication, radiotherapy and nerve blocks.

Another common fear is that cancer is always painful. This is not true. Some cancers cause no physical pain at all. If you are in pain, there are many things that can control it. Other methods of pain relief include medication, radiotherapy and nerve blocks.

Being concerned about your future is a normal way to feel. It can be hard for your doctor to predict the outcome of your treatment. Not knowing can make you feel anxious. The more you find out about your illness and its treatment, the less anxious you will be.

The real facts about cancer and its treatment are not as frightening as you might imagine. Talk to your doctor.

The real facts about cancer and its treatment are not as frightening as you might imagine. Talk to your doctor.

Fear and uncertainty

1800 200 700 for a copy of the booklet, "Sexuality and Cancer." It may help to know that you have cancer. To find out more information, contact the National Cancer Helpline.
Withdrawal and isolation

'Please leave me alone.'

There may be times during your illness when you want to be left alone to sort out your thoughts and feelings. This can be hard for your family and friends who want to share your thoughts. But at these times, you may need time to think about your own thoughts and feelings without being disturbed by others. It is usually helpful to bring these feelings out into the open so that they can be heard and discussed. Bonding up against them can make everyone feel angry or guilty. The effects of cancer can sometimes cause the feelings to stop you wanting to talk. It might be an idea to discuss this with your GP or hospital doctor who may prescribe a course of antidepressant drugs. He or she may notice that similar changes that cancer can make to their lives.

Sometimes depression can stop you wanting to talk. It might be an idea to discuss this with your GP or hospital doctor, who may prescribe antidepressant drugs.

Resentment

'Resentment

sexual activity causing regular cancer

experienced, you should be reassured that there is no link with.

Blame and guilt

'If I hadn’t … this would never have happened.’

It is not unusual to feel resentful and miserable because you have

Don’t bottle up your feelings – express them.

If you are finding it difficult to talk to your family, tell your nurse.

Sometimes depression can stop you wanting to talk. It might be an

When your illness is at the forefront of your mind, you will talk about it.

If you feel depressed, it is healthier to express your feelings than to bottle them up. If you feel depressed, it is healthier to express your feelings than to bottle them up.

Sometimes depression can stop you wanting to talk. It might be an idea to discuss this with your GP or hospital doctor, who may prescribe antidepressant drugs.
Understanding testicular cancer

Cancer, for relatives and friends of people with cancer is available from the Irish Cancer Society. Call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700 for a copy.

Talking to children

There is a booklet, When Do I Tell the Children: A Guide for the

my children. There are many more than there are.

something wrong so don’t keep them in the dark. They

explain that the child can conserve when it

occur earlier. Life may be better for some of their

very young children. You may find that your child

way for all children. You may find that your child’s

independent. An open honest approach is usually the best

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major concern for you and turning to become more

needs in learning to cope with the situation. They may be torn

Adolescents can understand much more. They may have special

needs in learning to cope with the situation. They may be torn

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An open honest approach is usually the best

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Talking to children

1800 200 700 for a copy.

Are there any friendships that are available?

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Are there any friendships that are available?

There are no friendships that are available.
Try to eat as well as you can. Eat little and often using lots of different types of foods with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Think about joining a support group. These groups allow you to share your feelings with others who have been diagnosed with different types of cancer. Support groups do not replace the support of your family and friends. They are just an extra form of help for some people.

Try to get as well as you can. Eat little and often using lots of different types of foods with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Eat well is a habit that you need to continue throughout your treatment.

At times you may not be able to do the things you used to take for granted. Try to take a holiday or spend more time on your hobbies. Others prefer to take a holiday or spend more time on a hobby.

In your illness, you can become involved in your treatment.

Some people find it helpful to talk to a counselor or a specialist in psychological medicine.

Your illness is happening to them, you can do this by becoming involved in their treatment.

This can help some people feel more in control of their illness.

Try to do it as often as you can. Anyone people find their treatment easier to take if they do it as often as possible.

If the idea of changing your diet or taking exercise does not appeal to you, don’t do it. Just do whatever suits you. Some people find it helpful to talk to a counselor or a specialist in psychological medicine.

Always ask for information that is personal from your own doctors.

Follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. Take your medication.

Let your doctor know if you have any problems or worrying side-effects. He or she can decide what to do to help you. If you say nothing a small problem can become more serious.

After 3 or 4 cycles of treatment you may feel much better. You can look forward to recovering.

If you forget and are not sure what to do, ask your doctor. Write down the answers if you want.

After 3 or 4 cycles of treatment you may feel much better. You can look forward to recovering.

Always ask for information that is personal from your own doctors.

If you and your family understand your illness and its treatment, you will be better able to cope.

If you think there is nothing they can do other than hand you over to the doctors and hospital, this is not true. There are many things that you can do.

Try to get as well as you can. Eat little and often using lots of different types of foods with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Some people find it helpful to talk to a counselor or a specialist in psychological medicine.
Who else can help?

There are many people ready to help you and your family throughout treatment and afterwards.

- Medical social worker
- Oncology liaison nurses
- Cancer nurse coordinators
- Psycho-oncology services
- Community welfare officer and community health services
- Helpline nurses.

In your area, you can also ask your local health centre for more information about any of the services listed above. They have a number of support groups to help you and your family throughout treatment and afterwards.

- Cancer Society Helpline nurses
- Community nurse health centres
- Support groups
- Psychological services
- Community health centre services

When you go home, there are various community health services available in your local health centre. These centres have family centres that can help you and your family through your treatment and onwards.

Other services that may be available in your area include:

- Support groups
- Psychologist clinics
- Community health centres
- Medical social worker
- Helpline nurses.
**Life after treatment**

Most men are delighted when the treatment ends and they are told that they no longer have testicular cancer. However, they are often surprised at how long it takes to regain their health. You may feel a while to sort out your emotions and what it means to you. It is not easy to come to terms with the prospect of regaining your health.

**Anxiety**

You may find that you miss the regular contact with the people who looked after you during your regular visits to hospital. You might think about all they have been through. This anxiety can be overwhelming at times. It may help to talk about your feelings. You might not feel ready to lead as active a life as you did before treatment. It is better not to fight these feelings but to allow your body the time it needs to recover.

If you have a problem that is worrying you, tell your doctor or nurse. If you are still anxious and upset, ask to speak to a medical social worker or counsellor. The effects of treatment may take a year or more to get over. The long-term effects of treatment are often not appreciated at how long it takes to regain their full strength and fitness. It is important to talk about any ongoing anxiety. Don’t be afraid to talk openly to your partner or a close friend. If you find this difficult, someone who has had the same illness may be able to help. Men Against Cancer (MAC) is the support group for men with prostate and testicular cancer. It provides patients and relatives with information, advice and emotional support.

**Fertility**

It is not easy to come to terms with the prospect of regaining your fertility. Doctors cannot always tell whether the infertility is going to return. Some men are delighted when the treatment ends and they no longer have to worry about their fertility. However, you may continue to feel quite tired after treatment ends. This is very common as it will be at least a year before your body has returned to its normal routines. The effects of treatment may last for a year or more. It is common to feel a lack of energy after treatment ends. This is not easy to come to terms with after treatment ends. Tiredness with prostate and testicular cancer is common and can last for a long time.

You may continue to feel a lack of energy after treatment ends. This is not easy to come to terms with after treatment ends. Tiredness with prostate and testicular cancer is common and can last for a long time.
suncream at all times. The sun’s rays that cause sunburn can be extra harmful to skin that has been exposed to radiation. You may be at risk of getting skin cancer.

Chemotherapy can also make your skin more sensitive to the damaging effects of the sun, especially if you have had treatment recently. You may get sunburn more easily. Do not expose your skin to the sun, even if the sun feels warm.

If you are out in the sun keep your skin covered up. Protect your skin by wearing a high-factor protective suncream. If you are on a beach or at the pool, wear a hat and keep your skin covered up.

Try to eat a variety of foods. Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables and cutting out sweets and cakes may help to bring your weight back to normal. It is important to control your weight during treatment. Do not gain too much weight.

Properly prepare your skin by wearing a high-factor protective suncream all the time. Make sure that your skin is covered up. Your doctor will also want to check for signs of recurrence and to follow up on any ongoing side-effects.

These issues are more important as they will allow your doctor to plan your treatment.

Follow-up

These visits are most important, as they will allow your doctor to check for signs of recurrence and to follow up on any ongoing side-effects. Your doctor will also want to check for signs of recurrence and to follow up on any ongoing side-effects.

Understanding testicular cancer

Once you are over the effects of treatment it is possible to have tests done to show whether you are fertile or not. These tests are quite straightforward. Your doctor may organise them for you.

If you can have children, you may worry that the cancer may be passed on to your children. You may also be worried about the chances of becoming fertile or not. It is important to know that these fears are unfounded. Many men go on to father healthy babies after treatment for testicular cancer.

Healthy lifestyle

Some organs in the body, such as the lungs, are more sensitive to the damaging effects of tobacco smoke if they have been exposed to radiation. There is help available to give you advice on giving up the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. Some hospitals have special stop-smoking clinics. Ask your doctor or nurse if there is one in your hospital.

If you are between check-ups or you have a symptom or problem that worries you, let your doctor know by making an appointment. Your doctor will also want to check for signs of recurrence and to follow up on any ongoing side-effects. Your doctor will also want to check for signs of recurrence and to follow up on any ongoing side-effects.

End of treatment

If you have finished treatment, it is important to know that treatment does not mean that you are cured. It is possible to have a second cancer because of the treatment. Living a healthy lifestyle may help to lessen the chances of you developing health problems in the future.
Health cover

Health cover falls into two categories – cover for medical card holders and cover for all other categories. Details of what these holders and cover for all other categories. Details of what these

Private healthcare cover

Private health insurance is used to pay for private care in hospital or from various specialists in hospitals or in their practices. In Ireland this is available through the VHI, BUPA, VIVAS... it is best to check the level of cover provided by your insurance company, both for inpatient and outpatient services.

Benefits and Allowances

Disability Allowance

This is a benefit for insured people. Eligibility will depend on your PRSI contributions. You must be under 66 and unfit to work due to illness. Each week you must send a social welfare medical report to your GP, who must send a copy of this to your insurer. You must also pay for prescription charges, but this may be covered by your insurance company. If you qualify for a medical card, you may be eligible for a GP visit card.

Disability Benefit

You may qualify for Disability Allowance if you are not eligible for Disability Benefit and able to work for at least 16 hours a week.

Understanding testicular cancer

For most people, a delay rather than a loss of patency work. A delay might result in loss of patency.

Benefits and Allowances

Insurance companies offer benefits for patency and continues care. You should send your claim to the Department of Social and Family Affairs by your doctor to the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This will affect your ability to work due to illness. Each week you must send a social welfare medical report to your GP, who must send a copy of this to your insurer. You must also pay for prescription charges, but this may be covered by your insurance company. If you qualify for a medical card, you may be eligible for a GP visit card.

Drugs Payment Scheme

Under the Drugs Payment Scheme, individuals and families, including spouses and dependant children, pay a limit of €85 at pharmacies. If you opt for egg freezing, the cost of the drugs used in the procedure can be refunded through the DPS. For more information, please contact your local HSE office.

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Life insurance

Life insurance companies offer benefits for patency and continues care. You should send your claim to the Department of Social and Family Affairs by your doctor to the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This will affect your ability to work due to illness. Each week you must send a social welfare medical report to your GP, who must send a copy of this to your insurer. You must also pay for prescription charges, but this may be covered by your insurance company. If you qualify for a medical card, you may be eligible for a GP visit card.

Understanding testicular cancer

For most people, to qualify for a medical card depends on a means test. Financial guidelines are set out each year and are available from your local Health Service Executive (HSE) office. If you have a cancer diagnosis, in this case your spouse and children will not be covered if your means are over the limit.
If you are employed but wish to care for a sick relative, you may qualify for a Carer's Benefit. This is a payment made to insured persons who leave the workforce to care for someone in need of constant and full-time care for at least 8 weeks before you intend to leave employment so that your eligibility can be assessed prior to leaving your employment.

For more information, contact the Carer's Benefit Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Government Buildings, Ballinalee Road, Longford. Tel: (043) 45211, Ext. 8787 / Dublin (01) 704 3000, Ext. 8787.

Application forms are available from post offices, social welfare offices or the Disability Allowance Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford. Tel: (043) 45211 or (01) 874 8444.

Invali8iDDy  PPeennssiioonn
This is a pension paid instead of a Disability Benefit or Allowance, if you are unable to work in the long term. There are three cases where you can be eligible. (1) If you have been assessed under the Employment Allowance Scheme. (2) If you are unable to work because of a health problem that is unlikely to improve, such as a severe heart condition. (3) If you are over age 60 and have a serious illness or incapacity.

Your eligibility for this pension will also depend on your PRSI contributions. You are allowed a free travel pass and certain extra benefits, such as bottled gas, telephone rental, fuel. Application forms are available from your social welfare office or the Dept of Social and Family Affairs. Application forms are available from post offices, social welfare offices or the Disability Allowance Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford. Tel: (043) 45211 or (01) 874 8444.

Carer's Allowance
This is an allowance for carers on low incomes who look after someone who needs full-time care and attention. There are a number of eligibility criteria that need to be met. Carer's Allowance forms are available from your local social welfare office or from the HSE. Application forms are available from post offices, social welfare offices or the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Application forms are available from post offices, social welfare offices or the Disability Allowance Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford. Tel: (043) 45211 or (01) 874 8444.
In general, people who do not have medical cards may be charged for the service. However, the practice varies between HSE areas and is often dependent on personal circumstances. Charges may be waived in certain cases, e.g. hardship, etc.

Further information:

- If you have queries about health and social services, contact the HSE office in your area. In 2005 the functions of the health boards were transferred to the Health Service Executive (HSE).

- For social welfare queries contact:
  - Information Service
    - Dept of Social and Family Affairs
    - Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
    - Store Street
    - Dublin 1
    - Tel: 01 874 8444
    - Leaflet line: 1890 202 325
    - Email: info@welfare.ie
    - Website: www.welfare.ie

- For health and social services queries, contact the HSE office in your area. In 2005 the functions of the health boards were transferred to the Health Service Executive (HSE).

- Your community welfare officer in your local health centre
- The medical social worker in the hospital you are attending

Your community welfare officer in your local health centre is the direct way to check your eligibility to claim:
- If you are inquiring about entitlements and benefits, the most dependant on your circumstances at the time of your illness, there are many other bases and entitlements which may be relevant.

Further information:

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Irish Cancer Society Services

The Irish Cancer Society funds a range of cancer support services that provide care and support for people with cancer at home and in hospital.

Homecare nurses

Homecare nurses are specialist palliative care nurses who offer advice on pain control and other symptoms. They provide care and support for people at home and when they are in hospital. The Irish Cancer Society funds a range of cancer support services.

Night nursing

Night nursing is provided by a number of the homecare teams. If you need help, you can find out more about this service from your GP.

Oncology liaison nurses

Oncology liaison nurses provide information as well as emotional and practical support to patients and their families.

Cancer Information Service (CIS)

The Society also provides a Cancer Information Service (CIS) that provides a range of services.

The National Cancer Helpline

The National Cancer Helpline is a freefone service that gives advice on cancer issues.

The Society also provides a Cancer Information Service (CIS) that provides a range of services.

Understanding testicular cancer

Information is also available from your local Citizens Advice Centre. A list of these centres is available from your local Citizens Advice Centre.

More information is available from your local Citizens Advice Centre.

www.comhairle.ie

There are also some booklets available that may help you. These include:

- Information Guide to Health Services (published by the Dept of Health and Children). Copies are available from your local HSE area office. Tel: 01 671 4711 for local HSE numbers.
- Entitlements for People with Disabilities (published by Comhairle) available from Comhairle. Tel: 01 605 9000. Email: comhairle@comhairle.ie

Website: www.comhairle.ie

Affiliates: Tel: 03 444 878. Email: info@welfare.ie
Cancer information booklets
These booklets provide information on all aspects of cancer and its treatment. They also offer practical advice on learning how to cope with your illness. You can request these booklets free of charge from the Irish Cancer Society.

Cancer support groups
The Irish Cancer Society funds a range of support groups set up to support you and your family at the time of diagnosis, throughout treatment and afterwards. These include:
- Testicular and prostate cancer
- Acute leukaemia
- Blood cancer
- Lung cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Breast cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Gynaecological cancer
- Palliative care

Coping with cancer can be very stressful. Patients and their families sometimes find it difficult to cope with the challenges of their illness. Sometimes, families of cancer patients need support and help.

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- Testicular and prostate cancer
- Acute leukaemia
- Blood cancer
- Lung cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Breast cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Gynaecological cancer
- Palliative care

Patient grants
A diagnosis of cancer can bring with it the added burden of financial worries. In certain circumstances, the Irish Cancer Society may provide financial grants to help with travel, accommodation, books, and other expenses. If you would like more information on any of the above services, call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700.

Understanding testicular cancer
The Irish Cancer Society offers confidential information, support and guidance to people concerned about testicular cancer. It is staffed by specialist cancer nurses who have access to the most up-to-date facts on testicular cancer. You can contact us by email, phone, or in person at our help lines.

If you would like more information on any of the above services, call the National Cancer Helpline 1800 200 700.
Understanding testicular cancer

Frequently asked questions
Here is a list of questions people often want to ask. There is also some space for you to write down your own questions if you wish.

1. What is testicular cancer?
2. Where exactly is it?
3. What are my treatment choices?
4. What side-effects or after-effects will I have?
5. What can be done about side-effects?
6. Where are my treatment choices?
7. Will my treatment affect my fertility?
8. Is there anything I can do to help myself during treatment?
9. What will happen if my partner becomes pregnant while I am on treatment?
10. Do I need to use contraception during my treatment? When will treatment
    begin?
11. Will my treatment affect my fertility?
12. Do I have to stay in hospital for my treatment?
13. How long will my treatment take?
14. Why is follow-up so important? Why do I need to attend for regular blood tests?
15. How successful is this treatment for my cancer?
16. How long will my treatment take?
17. Do I have to stay in hospital for my treatment?
18. How long will my treatment take?
19. Where are my treatment choices?
20. What is testicular cancer? Where exactly is it?

Here is a list of questions people often want to ask. There is also some space for you to write down your own questions if you wish.

Your own questions

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer

Answer
Acknowledgements

We would like to extend a special word of thanks to the following people for their invaluable contributions to this booklet:

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Susan Rowan, Patient Education Editor

We hope that this booklet has been of help to you. If you have any suggestions as to how it could be improved, we would be delighted to hear from you.

If, after reading this booklet or at any time in the future, you feel you would like more information or someone to talk to, please phone our National Nurses on Freefone 1800 200 700.

Would you like to help us?

The Irish Cancer Society relies entirely on voluntary contributions from the public in the provision of patient care, education and research.

The Irish Cancer Society, 443/455 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4

Tel: 01 231 0500  Email: info@irishcancer.ie

Understanding testicular cancer 80
The Irish Cancer Society is the national charity for cancer care, dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem and improving the lives of those living with cancer.