

Everyman Male Cancer Awareness Month: June 2011



Everyman Male Cancer Awareness Month

“Everyman” was set up by the Institute of Cancer Research to heighten awareness of and raise funds for Prostate and Testicular cancers. *Everyman's* mission is to stamp out testicular and prostate cancer by increasing awareness of the tell-tale signs, and understanding the importance of treating them.

PROSTATE CANCER

The prostate is a male sex gland located underneath the bladder. It is about the size of a walnut and fits around the tube (urethra) which carries urine out of the bladder. Around 750 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year in Northern Ireland and over 200 men die from the disease. The majority of men with prostate cancer are aged over 60.

Signs and Symptoms

One of the problems related to prostate cancer is that, in its early stages, it often does not cause symptoms. When they do occur they may include any of the following symptoms and signs:

- Having to rush to the toilet to pass urine
- Passing urine more often and / or at night
- Difficulty getting the flow of urine started
- Starting and stopping whilst passing urine
- Discomfort (pain or burning) whilst passing urine
- A feeling of not having emptied the bladder fully
- Dribbling of urine
- Blood in urine or semen
- Pain or stiffness in the back, hips or pelvis.

The PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test can be used to screen for early prostate cancer, however this is not a foolproof test.

Treatment: There are currently four main treatment options.

Surgery: The entire prostate gland is removed in an operation called a ‘prostatectomy’.

Radiotherapy: High energy rays are used to destroy the cancer cells.

Hormone treatment: Drugs can be used to lower the level of testosterone in the blood.

Brachytherapy: A treatment where radioactive ‘seeds’ are implanted directly into the tumour.

TESTICULAR CANCER

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer to affect men between the ages of 15 and 45 years, and approximately 50 men are diagnosed with testicular cancer in Northern Ireland each year. This type of cancer has an overall cure rate of 95%, and the cure rate can be as high as 99% if caught at an early stage.

Signs and Symptoms

- A lump in either testicle
- Any enlargement of the testicle
- A feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- A dull ache in the abdomen or groin
- A sudden collection of fluid in the scrotum
- Growth or tenderness of the upper chest.

Regular self-examination will help you become more aware of the normal feel and size of your testicles so that any abnormalities can be spotted early on. Most lumps are not cancerous but the earlier you find out, the earlier you can get any necessary treatment. And remember – if caught early, testicular cancer is 99% curable.

Treatment

If caught early and the cancer has not spread, treatment will ordinarily be the surgical removal of the cancerous testicle. If the cancer has spread, this will usually be followed by a course of chemotherapy. Treatment may be very intensive, but most patients cured of testicular cancer have no long-term side effects from treatment.

WHAT TO DO

If you do have any of these symptoms, don't just wait and hope that they disappear - go and get checked out by your doctor.

If in doubt – check it out!

References and additional sources of information:

www.nicsohs.gov.uk

www.everyman-campaign.org

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.ulstercancer.org

www.actioncancer.org

www.cancer.gov

