Testicular Problems and Self-Exam

Men can examine themselves easily and effectively with positive results. Monthly exams **pick up problems early** and **save lives.** There are numerous causes of swelling in the testicle. Testicular cancer usually appears as a firm painless lump in the front part of the testicle. This may feel like a dull ache or heavy feeling located in the lower *abdomen* (belly), groin, or scrotum.

The risk is greater in men with undescended testicles and it is more common in young men. It is responsible for almost a fifth of cancers in males between ages 15 and 34. Other common causes of swellings, lumps, and testicular pain include injuries, *inflammation* (soreness) from infection, hydrocele, and torsion. These are a few of the reasons to do monthly self examination of the testicles. The exam only takes minutes and could add years to your life. ***Get in the habit!***

SELF EXAMINATION OF THE TESTICLES

The testicles are easiest to examine after warm baths or showers and are more difficult to examine when you are cold. This is because the muscles attached to the testicles retract and pull them up higher or into the abdomen. While standing, roll one testicle between the thumb and forefinger. Feel for lumps, swelling, or discomfort. A normal testicle is egg shaped and feels firm. It is smooth and not tender. The spermatic cord can be felt as a firm spaghetti-like cord at the back of the testicle. It is also important to examine your *groins.* This is the crease between the front of your leg and your abdomen. Also, feel for enlarged *lymph nodes* (glands). Enlarged nodes are also a cause for you to see your caregiver for evaluation.

Self examination of the testicles and groin areas on a regular basis will help you to know what your own testicles and groins feel like. This will help you pick up an *abnormality* (difference) at an earlier stage. Early discovery is the key to curing this cancer or treating other conditions. Any lump, change, or swelling in the testicle calls for immediate evaluation by your caregiver. Cancer of the testicle does not result in impotence and it does not prevent normal intercourse or prevent having children. If your caregiver feels that medical treatment or chemotherapy could lead to infertility, sperm can be frozen for future use. It is necessary to see a caregiver as soon as possible after the discovery of a lump in a testicle.

Document Released: 03/26/2002 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.