Useful Info: What You and Your Son Should Know About Cancer of the Testis

- Routine self-examination of each testis should begin at the age of 13 or 14.
- Cancer of the testis is the most common solid tumor in young men.
- Cancer of the testis is most often discovered during self-examination.
- When discovered early, cancer of the testis is highly curable.
- A history of only one testis or an undescended testis increases the risk of cancer. Both the surgically “brought down” testis and the normally descended testis are at increased risk for cancer.
- Once a month, your son should check each testis for a lump, increase in size, or unusual tenderness.
- Ask your doctor to demonstrate how to do a self-exam.
- Be sure your son knows the signs that require a prompt evaluation – a lump, increase in size, or unusual tenderness.

Sudden Groin Pain

Seek care immediately for sudden “knife-like” groin pain (frequently so severe that there is nausea and vomiting) in males ages 12 and older.

The most common cause of sudden groin pain in this age group is testicular torsion or twisting of the blood supply to the testis. Emergency surgery within four to six hours is required to prevent permanent damage to the testis.

How to Perform a Testicular Self-Exam

The exam is easiest to perform after a shower when the skin of the scrotum is relaxed. It is normal to feel a soft bumpy area on the top and behind the testis – this is the epididymis. The firm, rope-like structure on the back and above the testis is the vas deferens.

Holding the testis between your thumb and fingers, roll the testis between your fingers feeling for lumps or unusual tenderness. Check to be sure there is no difference in size between the two testes.

Call your doctor for an appointment if there is an abnormal or questionably abnormal finding. Do not check and recheck the abnormal finding. Leave it alone and see a doctor.

Do not put off your call to the doctor hoping the problem will go away on its own.