

PRINT TRANSCRIPT - Knowing the Facts about Testicular Cancer

Uncommon Diseases Strikes Mostly Younger Men

One of the least talked about cancers is testicular cancer, primarily because it's not anywhere near as common as other cancers. According to the [American Cancer Society](#), about 1 of every 250 men will develop testicular cancer at some point in their life, including cyclist Lance Armstrong and Olympic ice skating gold medalist Scott Hamilton. This year, about 9,610 cases of testicular cancer will be diagnosed and there will be 440 deaths from the disease. For those men impacted by testicular cancer, it can be a difficult journey to navigate.

"There are two main kinds," said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. "The seminoma versus the non-seminoma type. In general one of the things that makes it unique it is very rare, but it is one of the most common cancers for 15 and 35 year old men even though that age group doesn't have much of any type of cancer, thankfully. For them, it's a cancer that tends to hit people a little earlier and younger than other cancers."

The signs and symptoms for testicular cancer include:

- Painless lump or swelling in either testicle (most common)
- Dull ache in the lower abdomen or the groin
- Sudden build-up of swelling in the scrotum
- Pain or discomfort in a testicle or in the scrotum
- Back pain

"A lot of times the first thing is a mass or a bump you can feel on the testicle," Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. "Usually it's painless, which is why some people don't worry about it and that's what we tell people any bump is new that you haven't felt before is something you might want to share with your doctor. Some people do have pain, some people do have an ache in their abdomen. I usually describe to men when you get hit in the testicles we all know what that feels like, that dull ache that kind of lingers is sometimes the pain that people describe."

While not much is known about how one gets testicular cancer some risk factors include: family history, abnormal development of the testicles and history of undescended testicles. Dr. Fulton says while it may be an awkward conversation to have, it's important to talk to your physician if you suspect any type of problem.

"We are the best judge of our body," said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. "We know the lumps and bumps that are new and the things that just don't feel right. Sometimes we're embarrassed to talk about those things and I think we need to get over that

embarrassment and share with a trusted provider that we have to get the right answers and make sure this is nothing bad. And if it is, what kinds of treatments are available.”

Thanks to medical advances, testicular cancer is highly curable through surgery and treatments. But the most important way of getting a handle on a potential problem is performing a self-exam at least once a month to check for any lumps, bumps or swelling.

“You need to check yourself regularly in multiple areas,” said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. “As far as screening it’s tough because there’s not a good screening for testicular cancer. It really is found on exam and symptoms more than anything else. So you have to report it to your doctor. There’s not a blood test or a test you can go in for to get screened easily.”

To learn more about cancer services provided through OSF HealthCare, visit <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/cancer/>