Testicular Cancer Awareness Month in the Time of COVID-19

April is testicular cancer awareness month, but has been co-opted by COVID-19. Let's put them together...unlike my testicles

April 9, 2020 By Justin Birckbichler

Over the past few years, I've written a blog post each April to commemorate Testicular Cancer Awareness Month and spread the good word to the masses. However, the entire world is essentially under quarantine right now and we are to avoid public situations… thanks a lot, COVID-19.

So to maintain social distancing and discover the top five things you need to know about testicular cancer, read this blog post to learn all you need to know in 800 words or less. It's not like you have anywhere to go anyways.

Be sure to do your monthly testicular self-exams.

Best done during or after a shower when the scrotum is relaxed, a self exam is a quick and effective way to catch testicular cancer early on. Just place your index and middle fingers under the testicle with your thumb on top. Firmly but gently, roll the testicle between your fingers.

Any weird lumps or bumps should be checked out by a doctor ASAP. When you get out of the shower, be sure to look for signs of changes in shape, color, or swelling.

While this is a great way to self-quarantine, be sure to continue this practice each and every month.

Know the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer.

The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a lump on the testicle. Even if there is no obvious pain or discomfort, it's still a good idea to have it checked out… unlike the decision to hoard mountains of toilet paper and gallons of hand sanitizer, like some post-apocalyptic hygiene-obsessed king.

Other signs of testicular cancer include unexplained swelling, pain, aching, and/or feelings of heaviness of the testicle and lower back/abdominal region or breast pain.

Just make sure the back pain isn't from all the extra time in bed.

Understand risk factors for testicular cancer.

Truth be told, there aren't a whole lot of risk factors for testicular cancer. Basically, if you have testicles, you can develop testicular cancer. Nonetheless, here are some things scientists have found:

- If a man has testicular cancer, his brothers or sons may be at higher risk to develop it. However, only a small number of cases occur in families. Most men with testicular cancer do not have a family history of the disease.
- White men are 4 to 5 times more likely to develop testicular cancer than black men and Asian-American men. The risk for American Indians falls between that of Asians and whites.
- Another risk factor of testicular cancer includes an undescended testicle.

Eating all of your quarantine snacks in one day is not a risk factor in developing testicular cancer, but not good for your overall health (or wallet).

Be aware of testicular cancer myths.

First and foremost, there is no scientifically proven cause of testicular cancer. Please stop sliding into my DM's to tell me that cell phones in the pocket cause testicular cancer.

Furthermore, while people generally regard cancer as an "old person disease," testicular cancer ruins that curve. 50% of testicular cancer cases occur in males aged 15-44, with the average age at the time of a testicular cancer diagnosis being 33. To restate the point from number 3, if you have testicles, you risk them going rogue.

Finally, while potentially uncomfortable, bike riding, tight pants, and getting hit in the nuts also will not cause testicular cancer. Just make sure you do put on some pants for your Zoom meeting, please.

Learn some ways to be proactive in remembering to do your self-exam.

To quote the Little Mermaid, "I've got gadgets and gizmos aplenty. I've got whosits and whatsits galore." Check out this collection of resources designed to make sure you're remembering to do your self-exam every month.

- #TakeA2nd4TheBoys: The premise of the #TakeA2nd4TheBoys campaign is simple. You're more likely to remember to check yourself if you have a reminder. Using this link, you can automatically add this as an event on your Google calendar, complete with directions.
- Monthly Text Reminders: Text @selfexam to 81010 (or click here) to be enrolled in a free,

monthly text reminder program, courtesy of the Testicular Cancer Society.

- National Ball Check Day: Created by Band of Ballers alumni Jason Greenspan and Thomas Cantley, National Ball Check Day™ is a social media campaign and day aiming to MANdate testicular self-exams and raise awareness for early detection of testicular cancer. On the first Tuesday in April, they want to raise awareness for testicular cancer, in hopes of promoting "a further discussion of performing monthly self-exams."

All of the above are free and a great way to spend your quarantine time. Repeated viewing of Tiger King will not help you to remember anything other than how insane this world can be.

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