

Let's Talk Balls

A young person's guide to testicular cancer



your
PR.i.VATES

www.yourprivates.org.uk

Teacher Guidance

Talking about any type of cancer can be difficult. Talking about a male specific cancer to young people can also cause embarrassment. To provide the best safe learning environment students should be in a class room of their peers and be between the ages of 14-16.

Links:

Links to the Department for Education Statutory Guidance and PSHE Association Programme of Study

This lesson should form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. It will be most effective when taught within a unit of work on health and prevention.

Department for Education Statutory Guidance

Pupils should know:

Health and prevention

- (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening

PSHE Association Programme of Study

H13. to identify, evaluate and independently access reliable sources of information, advice and support for all aspects of physical and mental health

H14. about the health services available to people; strategies to become a confident user of the NHS and other health services; to overcome potential concerns or barriers to seeking help

H16. how to take increased personal responsibility for maintaining and monitoring health including cancer prevention, screening and self-examination

Continued



Establishing a safe learning environment:

It is imperative to create a safe environment for students for all topics in PSHE education, but cancer may be a particularly sensitive subject. It is therefore important that teachers distance the learning from students to discourage personal disclosures in the classroom and to keep the learning environment safe – students should not discuss personal stories and teachers should not ask personal questions of students.

Ground rules should be consistently kept to and revisited throughout the lesson and should be clearly displayed in the classroom. It is good practice for teachers to negotiate and agree on ground rules with students, rather than them being 'given' or imposed. For example, a teacher might use the following statement: "In this lesson we will be exploring the topic of cancer. Issues like this can be very sensitive and difficult to talk about sometimes. It's okay to feel unsure or ask questions, but it's also important that as a group we all agree on how to treat each other during these lessons and that everyone feels comfortable and safe to take part. To do this, we will agree on a set of ground rules and consider what behaviour is acceptable during these lessons."

Sample ground rules that teachers might use include:

- We will always **respect** everyone in the group.
- We will be **sensitive** to everyone's different backgrounds, needs and experiences.
- We will keep everything that is discussed during the lesson **confidential***.
- We will keep people's names out of our discussions.
- We know that there are no wrong answers – everyone is here to learn.
- We know that we don't have to answer or discuss things we don't want to.
- We will treat others as we wish to be treated.

* reminder on the limits of confidentiality – teachers should explain to the students that if the information shared puts the young person at risk, they would have to let another adult know.

If a student has been affected by testicular or any other cancers they may find this lesson distressing or upsetting. It is recommended that teachers discuss with the student whether they would like to participate or whether they would prefer an alternative activity.

A question box is recommended for anonymous questions which can be submitted at the end of the session. The teacher can go away to answer the questions and come back at a later date. If a teacher cannot answer a specific question they should contact Orchid for advice on **0808 802 0010** or **helpline@orchid-cancer.org.uk**.

A variety of sources of support are provided at the end of the lesson - ensure students know where they can seek help and further advice about testicular cancer, both now and in the future.

FAQs:

What age should young people start to check their testicles?	Orchid would advise from the age of 14 onwards.
How often should they check?	There is no research into the effectiveness of monthly examination, however once a month allows boys or men to become familiar with their body and more proactive in health matters.
What is the most common age to develop testicular cancer?	It can happen at any age, but 80% of boys/men affected are between the ages of 15-45. Around 47% are under the age of 35.
What is the most common symptom of testicular cancer?	In over 90% of cases the most common symptom is a small lump, about the size of a pea or smaller, which is attached to the body of the testicle itself. 80% of the time this will be painless.
When should a boy/man seek advice?	Firstly, it is important to know the anatomy of the testicle and the position of the epididymis (this information is on the Z-card along with a diagram). By checking on a regular basis they should be able to identify anything that doesn't feel normal or has recently changed. However, this does not necessarily indicate that there is a potential problem; testicles can change in size or hardness for various reasons, but they should always inform a responsible adult and be reviewed by a GP.
What if a GP cannot identify a problem?	An ultrasound scan of the testicles will be arranged and this will happen very quickly. The scan is almost 100% accurate at identifying any type of testicular problem or condition.
Does surgery (orchidectomy) affect future fertility or the ability to have an erection?	No. Provided that the other testicle is healthy and functioning this should not be a problem. If men need chemotherapy after surgery a sample of sperm will be taken and stored in case the chemotherapy affects fertility.
Can both testicles be removed due to cancer?	Not usually - testicular cancer tends to affect one testicle. It can reoccur in the remaining testicle, but it is extremely rare to have both testicles affected at the same time.