Testicular pain

Pain or swelling in the testicles or scrotum: what it can mean and when to get help

What is testicular pain?

Pain in one or both testicles (balls) or the skin around them (the scrotum). It may start suddenly or slowly and spread to the groin or tummy. Most causes are common and treatable.

> ⚠ **Sudden, severe pain is an emergency.** Call 999 or go to A&E now. A twisted testicle needs an operation within hours to save it.

You might notice

- Sudden, severe pain in one testicle, sometimes waking you up
- Swelling, redness or warmth of the skin of the scrotum
- Pain that spreads into the groin or the lower tummy
- A dull ache or heavy, dragging feeling in the scrotum
- A lump, hardness or change in the shape of a testicle
- Feeling sick, being sick, a fever or pain passing urine

What can cause it

Twisted testicle (torsion)
Its blood supply is cut off: an emergency

Twisted tag (appendix)
A tiny tag twists, mostly in boys

Infection
Urine or sexual infection, or mumps

Injury
A knock, kick or sports injury

Hernia
Bowel pushes down into the scrotum

Fluid, cysts and veins
Common lumps, usually harmless

Testicular cancer
Usually a painless lump; very treatable

Pain from elsewhere
Kidney stones, groin strain or back

Who is more at risk

Under 25 (torsion) · **Aged 15 to 45 (cancer)** · **Undescended testicle** · **Family history of cancer** · **New sexual partners** · **Urine infection or catheter** · **Contact sports**

Looking after yourself

Never wait with sudden pain. Hours matter with a twisted testicle.

Do not feel embarrassed. Doctors check testicles every day.

Check yourself monthly. Learn what is normal for you after a shower.

Rest and support. Snug underwear eases pain from infection or injury.

Ease the pain. Paracetamol or ibuprofen if safe; ice after a knock.

Finish antibiotics. If an STI is possible, avoid sex until treated.

What the doctor will do

1. Ask about the pain and gently examine your tummy, groin and scrotum
2. Test your urine, and arrange tests for sexual infections if needed
3. Send you straight to hospital if there is any chance of a twist
4. Treat the cause, or arrange an ultrasound scan or specialist referral

Tell the doctor when the pain started, how quickly it came on, and about any lump, injury, fever or problems passing urine.

Call 999 or go to A&E if

- Sudden, severe testicle pain
- Pain with feeling or being sick
- A high or oddly angled testicle
- A boy with tummy and testicle pain

Contact us the same day if

- Pain building over a day or two
- Fever, discharge or stinging urine
- Pain after a knock not settling
- Antibiotics not helping by day 3

Found a lump?

Most lumps are not cancer, but always book to see us. A painless lump or change in a testicle may need an urgent scan. Testicular cancer is one of the most curable cancers when found early.

Our GP by SRS Health Group
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Contact us
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Out of hours
NHS 24: call 111
Support: orchid-cancer.org.uk

Based on NICE CKS (2026), BMJ Best Practice (2026) and Scottish Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer (2025). October 2026.