

Bitesize Guide to:



Penile Cancer

Penile Cancer is among the rarest forms of cancer. And while it has a high survival rate it can be a lethal condition and as a result it is important to learn the symptoms so as to be able to diagnose as early as possible. Here is our bitesize guide to the condition.

What is it?

The term 'cancer' describes the abnormal, uncontrollable growth of cells in the body, eventually forming masses called "tumours". Penile cancer refers to the development of such tumours in the penis or foreskin.

Who gets it?

Most cases of penile cancer are diagnosed in men after the age of 40.

Why does it happen?

Like most cancers the precise causes of penile cancer are not fully understood. However, the chances of developing penile cancer have been linked to a number of factors:

Those who suffer from phimosis are more likely to develop infections and subsequently have been shown to be at increased risk of penile cancer. Smoking has also been seen to place individuals at greater risk of penile Cancer. Additionally, those who carry HPV also have an increased risk of development.

Diagnosing Penile Cancer

If you notice any of the following symptoms, book an appointment with your GP immediately:

- pimple-like sore on your penis or foreskin
- Thickening of the skin of the penis or foreskin
- A change in the colour of the skin of the penis or foreskin
- Bleeding from the penis or from under the foreskin
- Bleeding during urination
- A foul-smelling discharge
- A rash on the penis

Treating Penile Cancer

Treatment for penile cancer will vary depending on the stage at which it is diagnosed but is likely to include radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or surgery. If caught early circumcision or microsurgery (surgery in which minimal tissue is removed) may be an option. If the cancer is significantly advanced some combination of chemotherapy, radiotherapy or a total penectomy could be necessary.

4 Key Facts about Penile Cancer

1. Penile cancer is a rare cancer with under a thousand new cases each year
2. Phimosis is a symptom in 90% of penile cancer cases.
3. Of those who develop penile cancer 68% survive the condition.
4. Men circumcised as children have not been know to develop penile cancer

If you think you may be suffering from penile cancer, speak to your GP.

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