

What happens after treatment for Stage 1 Testicular Cancer?

Testicular cancer is one of the most common cancers in young males. Thankfully, most people with testicular cancer can expect to be cancer-free after treatment.

For people with stage 1 testicular cancer – cancer that has not spread from the testicle – treatment involves removal of the testicle (orchidectomy) and sometimes chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Most people with stage 1 testicular cancer will never need any more treatment. But as the cancer may come back, so it is important to see your doctor regularly to keep a check on your health for at least five years after treatment.

The chance of the cancer coming back goes down over time, with the first two years after surgery being the time to keep a closer check. How often you are followed up depends on:

- the type of testicular cancer you had (either non-seminoma/mixed testicular cancer or pure seminoma)
- whether you had other treatment after surgery.

Sometimes your doctor might want to see you for more than five years or for testing more often. Check with your doctor about which follow-up recommendations apply to you.

There are several important parts of follow-up, which include:

Clinic appointments	Regular appointments with your doctor to check your health and concerns about any physical changes you have noticed, fertility, mental health, or other issues. These are important to help keep you well after treatment.
Physical Examination	Regular physical examinations, including checking your other testicle, are important to help monitor any signs of the cancer coming back.
Blood Tests	<i>Tumour markers</i> Some testicular cancers make proteins called “tumour markers” that can be identified. Changes in the tumour markers may tell us the cancer has come back. Tumour markers are monitored in blood tests and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) • Beta human chorionic gonadotropin (bhCG) • Lactate dehydrogenase (LDH)
	<i>Testosterone</i> Some people develop low testosterone (male sex hormone) levels after a testicle has been removed and/or after chemotherapy. These levels are also monitored because when testosterone is low, you may feel tired or less interested in sex and there are solutions to help if this is the case.
CT abdomen and pelvis	A CT (“cat” scan) is one way to check if the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes at the back of the belly (abdomen) or other parts of the body.
Chest x-ray	A chest x-ray will show if the cancer has spread to the lungs. Only people who had non-seminoma/mixed testicular cancer need to have this test.

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The table below shows the recommended follow-up for people treated for testicular cancer.

- Figure 1 is for pure seminoma testicular cancer
- Figures 2 and 3 are for non-seminoma/mixed testicular cancer, and whether you have had additional treatment after surgery.

“X” shows when the assessment is due. For example, if you had surgery for pure seminoma testicular cancer in January, your next routine visit and tests are recommended 6 months later in July. The timing of the first visit may be different if you have non-seminoma/mixed testicular cancer.

Figure 1: Follow-up Recommendations for Pure Seminoma Testicular Cancer After Surgery (With or Without Additional Treatment).

		Months since surgery (orchidectomy)							Discuss with your doctor
		6	12	18	24	36	48	60	
Physical exam	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Discuss with your doctor
Tumour markers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Other blood tests	X			X				X	
CT	X*	X	X*	X	X			X	
		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6+

*only if no additional treatment after surgery

Figure 2: Follow-up Recommendations for Non-Seminoma/Mixed Testicular Cancer After Surgery (Without Additional Treatment).

		Months since surgery (orchidectomy)																Discuss with your doctor		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	15	18	21	24	30	36	48		60	60+
Physical exam	X	X	X*	X	X*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Discuss with your doctor
Tumour markers	X	X	X*	X	X*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Other blood tests						X						X							X	
CT scan				X			X		X		X		X		X			X	X	
Chest x-ray				X			X		X		X		X		X			X	X	
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			Year 4		Year 5		Year 6+			

*only recommended for some patients

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Figure 3: Follow-up Recommendations for Non-Seminoma/Mixed Testicular Cancer After Surgery (With Additional Treatment).

	Months since chemotherapy finished							Discuss with your doctor				
	6	12	18	24	36	48	60		60+			
Physical exam	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Tumour markers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Other blood tests	X			X			X					
CT scan	X	X	X	X	X		X					
Chest x-ray	X	X	X	X	X		X					
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6+	

As well as regular tests to monitor if the cancer has come back, it is also important to include other ways to improve other parts of your general health and wellbeing after being diagnosed with testicular cancer. You can find out more here:

https://anzup.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ANZ-Test-cancer-flyer_PRINT-4-1.pdf