Penile Cancer

What Is Penile Cancer?

Penile cancer is a rare type of cancer that occurs on the skin of the penis or within the penis itself. It typically starts in the flat skin cells called squamous cells. The exact cause of penile cancer is not fully understood, but factors such as human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, smoking, having a compromised immune system, and poor hygiene are known to increase the risk.

Symptoms

Symptoms of penile cancer can vary but commonly include:

- A growth or sore on the penis that doesn't heal.
- Bleeding from the penis or from under the foreskin.
- A foul-smelling discharge.
- Thickening of the skin on the penis or a colour change.
- A lump or swelling at the end of the penis.
- Pain in the penis.
- Swollen lymph nodes in the groin area.

Treatment Options

Treatment for penile cancer depends on the stage and location of the cancer, as well as the patient's overall health. Options include:

- **Surgery:** The primary treatment for penile cancer, which can range from local excision to partial or total penectomy (removal of part or all of the penis).
- **Radiotherapy:** Using high-energy rays to target and kill cancer cells.
- **Chemotherapy:** Using anti-cancer medication to destroy cancer cells, either systemically (throughout the body) or topically (applied directly to the cancer).
- **Biological therapy:** Treatments that use the body's immune system to fight cancer.

Management

Management of penile cancer typically involves:

- **Diagnosis:** Confirming the presence of cancer through physical examination, biopsy, and imaging

tests.

- **Staging:** Determining the extent and spread of the cancer.
- **Treatment planning**: Deciding the best course of treatment based on the stage of cancer and patient health.
- **Treatment administration**: Undergoing the chosen treatment method(s), which may involve surgery, radiotherapy, and/or chemotherapy.
- **Follow-up care:** Regular monitoring to check for recurrence and manage any side effects of treatment.

Risks Associated With Treatment

Risks of penile cancer treatment vary with the type of treatment but may include:

- **Surgical risks:** Infection, bleeding, and complications from anaesthesia. Penectomy can result in psychological effects due to changes in body image and sexual function.
- **Radiotherapy risks:** Skin irritation, fatigue, and potential damage to surrounding tissues and organs.
- **Chemotherapy risks:** Nausea, vomiting, hair loss, increased risk of infection, and other systemic side effects.

Recovery

Recovery from penile cancer treatment involves several components:

- **Physical recovery:** Healing from surgery or side effects of radiotherapy/chemotherapy, which can take several weeks to months.
- **Emotional and psychological support:** Counselling or support groups to address emotional and psychological impacts, including changes in body image and sexual function.
- **Rehabilitation:** Physiotherapy to regain strength and function, particularly if extensive surgery was performed.
- **Regular follow-up appointments:** Monitoring for recurrence of cancer and managing any long-term side effects of treatment.

Overall, recovery is a gradual process that requires comprehensive support from healthcare providers, family, and support networks.

Why Choose Birmingham Urology Centre

At Birmingham Urology Centre, our experienced urologists provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment for penile cancer. We use the latest diagnostic tools and techniques to ensure accurate diagnosis and effective treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs.

Contact us today to book an appointment or for more information on penile cancer and treatment options.