



Men's health advocate says males should be taught about testicular examination in school

[ABC South East NSW](#)

By [Alice Matthews](#)

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[PHOTO: Call for boys to be taught about men's health.\(iStockPhoto/wrangel\)](#)

Men's Shed Week has triggered a debate about gender-specific health education in high schools, and prompted questions about disparities between men's and women's awareness.

Young men have not been made aware of their potential health conditions in the same way as young women, according to Chris Philbrick, Secretary of the Bombala Men's Shed in south east New South Wales.

What we have to do is get the message about to young blokes it's okay to go and talk to your doctor.

"They're quite happy to teach girls in schools how to do breast self-examination but when the issue is raised about teaching boys how to do testicular examination, they throw their arms up in horror because you can't have young men fiddling with their private parts," he said.

Mr Philbrick added young men often felt "*invincible*", and needed to be made more aware of their bodies and issues like testicular cancer.

The call has been backed by the Australian Medical Association in New South Wales.

Boys should be taught to examine themselves

Vice President Brad Frankum said stigma needed to be removed from the idea of self-examination for men.

"Half the population have testicles and they should be taught to examine themselves and know what's normal and to look out for anything abnormal.

"We need to destigmatise that whole area and teach boys it is okay to be conscious of their health, aware of what their bodies should be like and to keep an eye on things," he said.

Cancer Council Australia reported there was limited evidence suggesting testicular self-examination "*detects cancer earlier or improves outcomes.*"

Professor Frankum said that was likely due to self-examination among men rarely happening in the first place.



[PHOTO: Men's health check leaflet.](#)

"It's not routinely done. Young men don't regularly go to their GPs and have that examination [either]," he said.

He said there was a long way to go to find out whether self-examination would contribute to better outcomes.

But Professor Frankum said self-examination was important for more common issues like cysts, and broader health concerns like obesity and substance abuse.

"More generally, we don't focus as much on young men's health particularly ... I think we probably haven't focused enough on young men," he said.

"There are reasons for that. Women tend to come into contact with their doctors more because of reproductive issues; contraception, pap smear, having babies.

"Those issues have made young women, if not feel comfortable about it, at least feel they can safely go to their doctor to talk about it.

"What we have to do is get the message about to young blokes it's okay to go and talk to your doctor," he said.