

VA surgeon cuts off the wrong testicle

Benjamin Houghton went to a veteran's hospital in Los Angeles to have a potentially cancerous testicle removed, but instead of removing the painful one on the left the surgeon removed the perfectly healthy one on the right, according to the [Los Angeles Times](#).

"Houghton was left deprived of the testosterone the healthy testicle produced, setting him up for potential health complications including sexual dysfunction, depression, fatigue, weight gain and osteoporosis," the paper reports. "Within a healthcare system with nationally recognized patient safety innovations, he joined the ranks of hundreds of thousands of Americans each year who are victimized by medical errors."

In this case, the Air Force veteran's medical records show a series of small errors grew into one big mistake. The consent form identified the wrong testicle. The surgical team didn't mark the correct one before they sedated him. Doctors appear to have relied on the erroneous consent form, instead of other documents, during the "timeout" that is supposed to ensure they're cutting in the right spot.

Houghton was told about the mistake while he was in the recovery room. "At first I thought it was a joke," he tells the *Times*. "Then I was shocked. I told them, 'What do I do now?'"

He has filed a lawsuit.

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