

Hydrocele

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

What is a hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a collection of fluid in a sac in the scrotum next to the testis (testicle). A smooth protective lining surrounds the normal testis and this makes a small amount of 'lubricating' fluid to allow the testes to move freely. Excess fluid normally drains away into the veins in the scrotum. Occasionally, some fluid accumulates as a hydrocele. Hydroceles are normally painless although large hydroceles may cause discomfort because of their size. Walking or sexual activity may become uncomfortable if you have a very large hydrocele.

If the hydrocele causes no symptoms, one option is simply to leave it alone. If it becomes larger or troublesome, you can have the hydrocele operated on to drain the fluid and prevent a further build up of fluid in the future.

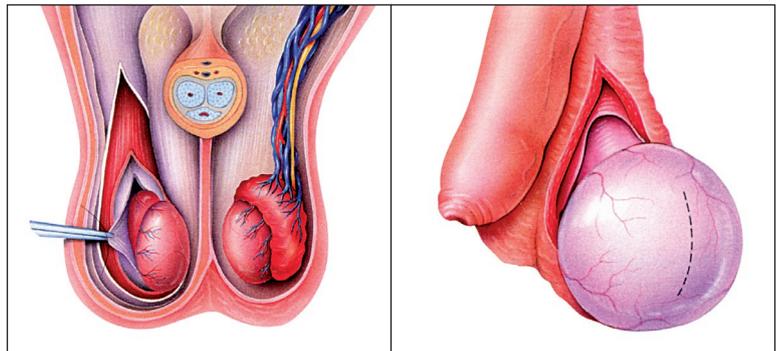
How is the procedure carried out?

The procedure is carried under general or local block regional anaesthesia in the operating theatre. A cut is made into the skin of the scrotum over the hydrocele. The liquid is emptied out. The testicle is examined and if all is well, the inner coverings of the testicle are stitched up to stop the liquid building up again. Finally, the skin is stitched up using dissolvable stitches. A local anaesthetic is usually given just before the general anaesthetic wears off so there is less pain for a few hours after the operation.

Before the Operation

Before your operation you will be asked to sign a consent form. This confirms that you understand the risks, benefits and possible alternatives to the procedure and have given your permission for it to go ahead.

The Procedure



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You may be asked to attend for a pre-assessment appointment where you will have blood tests, chest X-ray and ECG depending on your general health and any pre-existing medical conditions (older patients). Please bring any medications with you to this appointment and you will be told if any of them need to be stopped prior to surgery. **Make sure you alert the staff if you take warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel or any other blood-thinning medications.**

You will be asked to come into Springfield Hospital on the morning of the operation. You should be 'Nil By Mouth' for a certain time prior to admission. **Please check when you can eat and drink before the operation as your procedure may be cancelled on the day if you have had anything to eat or drink at the wrong time.**

The anaesthetist will see you in your room to go through any questions before surgery. You will be asked to sign a consent form, which explains the risks and benefits of the hydrocele repair procedure.

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Complications

You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to surgery. The main complications that may occur are as follows:

- Bleeding and pain around the wound site afterwards – this usually settles within 12hrs.
- Infection post-procedure – unusual, but require antibiotics if persistent.
- Recurrence of hydrocele – again unusual, but can occur, sometimes requiring re-operation.

After the operation

Once your operation is over, you will be woken and taken to the recovery suite to be monitored by the staff there before being moved back to the ward. You will be able to eat and drink on the ward and if you feel pain or feel sick, let the staff know, as they will be able to give you appropriate medication. You will be given regular, as well as stronger painkiller tablets as and when you need them. The dressing is a loose gauze padding with a scrotal support to apply some pressure to the wound.

The operation is usually done as a day case. This means that you come into hospital on the day of the operation and go home the same day. You may need to stay overnight if your operation has been carried out in the afternoon.

Discharge advice

For men who have had a general anaesthetic, you will need to arrange for a friend or relative to drive you home and stay with you for the next 24 hours. Try to keep the wound area dry for 48hrs and then bathe as normal. Soap and tap water are quite all right. Salted water is not needed.

You should try and wear the scrotal support for about a week to prevent swelling around the operation site. If bleeding continues, contact us for advice using the numbers below. Avoid sexual activity for a week and no heavy lifting for about two weeks. Driving should be safe after one week if all is well. Check with your insurance company if you have any doubts.

Outpatient Follow Up

You will be given an appointment to attend the outpatient clinic about 4-6 weeks after surgery. Any questions can be answered at this time.

If you are concerned about any aspect of your operation, please contact us using the details below

Contact telephone number:

Susie Nicol
Specialist Practitioner in Urology
Tel: 07903 927400

