

About Your Surgery

Hydrocele repair

This handout describes what a hydrocele is and gives instructions to follow before and after hydrocele repair.

What is a hydrocele?

Normally, the testicle sits inside a fluid-filled sac in the scrotum. The fluid is produced by the testicles and is absorbed by the body.

When too much fluid is produced, or if the fluid is not absorbed quickly enough, a *hydrocele* forms. The main symptom of a hydrocele is a painless, swollen testicle that feels like a water balloon.

How are hydroceles treated?

Hydroceles are treated by a surgery called *hydrocelectomy*. This is a minimally invasive surgery, which means only very small incisions are made. It is very effective in treating hydroceles.

In a hydrocelectomy, the fluid-filled sac around the testicle is opened and drained. The sac is then removed or folded back to prevent fluid from building up again.

A hydrocelectomy can be done in less than 1 hour. It may be done with general anesthesia, which will make you sleep through the surgery. Or, a local anesthetic might be used. This numbs just the testicles and scrotum, and you will be awake for the surgery.



Be sure to ask your doctor any questions you have about hydrocele repair surgery.

How to Prepare

- For 10 days before your surgery, do **not** take any aspirin or aspirin-like drugs such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These drugs may cause excess bleeding during and after your surgery.
- Do **not** eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.

For 24 Hours After Your Surgery

If you received general anesthesia, do **not**:

- Drive.
- Use heavy machinery.
- Drink alcohol.
- Eat any heavy or large meals. A heavy meal may be hard to digest.
- Make important decisions. General anesthesia makes it hard to think clearly. It can take up to 24 hours to wear off.

What to Expect After Surgery

- Your incision and surgery area will be covered with dressings (bandages).
- We will ask you to wear an athletic support for 1 full week after surgery.
- You may have some bruising and mild bleeding from the incision site. This is normal.
- Your incision is closed with 1 stitch that is under your skin. This stitch does not need to be removed. It will dissolve on its own after about 2 to 3 weeks.
- Your incision is also sealed with glue that protects it from water. You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. See “Day After Surgery” on page 3.

Fluids and Food

- Drink plenty of water so that you stay hydrated.
- When you get hungry, start with clear liquids or something light.
- Avoid spicy and greasy foods.
- Resume eating your normal foods as you are able to handle them.

Pain Medicine

- For moderate pain, take the pain medicine your doctor prescribed. Many doctors prescribe Vicodin, which contains acetaminophen and a prescription pain reliever. If you are taking Vicodin, always take it with food in your stomach so that you do not get nauseated.
- Do **not** drive while you are taking prescription pain medicine.
- For mild discomfort, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

- **Do not take acetaminophen while you are taking Vicodin.** If you are given pain medicine other than Vicodin, **ask your** doctor or nurse if it is safe to take acetaminophen while you are taking your prescription pain medicine.

Day After Surgery

- Call the Men's Health Center at 206-598-6358 to make a follow-up appointment in 3 to 4 weeks if you have not already done so.
- Rest for the first 48 hours after your surgery to lessen swelling.
- Apply cold packs (such as a bag of frozen peas) to your groin area for the first 24 hours to help reduce swelling. Cover the area with a towel first. Do **not** place the cold pack directly on your skin.
- Keep your wound dry for 24 hours after surgery. You may remove all dressings from inside the athletic support 24 hours after surgery.
- Keep wearing the athletic support for 1 full week.
- You may shower after you remove the dressings. After washing, dry the area well.
- Pain and swelling may be worse today than yesterday.
- Expect a small amount of bloody discharge from the incisions.
- You may have bruising around your incision site, scrotum, and on your penis. This is normal.

After the 2nd Day

- You may resume normal, **light** activity 48 hours after your surgery, or when you feel better. Let your body be your guide. If something you are doing is causing discomfort, slow down or stop and rest.
- You may resume more vigorous activities such as jogging or weight lifting in 1 week.
- Avoid all sexual activity, including masturbation, for 1 week.
- You may return to work when you feel comfortable enough to do so.

When to Call Your Doctor

- Call your doctor if you have:
 - Fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C)
 - Shaking and chills
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Allergic reactions to the drugs, such as hives, rash, nausea, or vomiting

- Some bloody discharge from the incision is normal. If the incision site becomes red, painful, or pulls apart, call the Men's Health Center.
- Bruising around the incision site is normal, but if the amount of swelling concerns you, call the Men's Health Center.

If you are concerned about any of these symptoms, or if you have other symptoms that bother you, please call the Men's Health Center. If you need attention after normal business hours, go directly to the Emergency Room.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Men's Health Center:
206-598-6358

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to
5 p.m.

After hours and on weekends
or holidays, call this same
number or go to the
Emergency Room.

For more information, visit
<http://depts.washington.edu/uroweb>.