

Hydrocele Repair (child)

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a swelling around the testicle caused by a collection of fluid. It is a common problem in children.

All boys have a connection between their abdomen and their scrotum before they are born.

By birth, this connection is usually closed. If it stays open, the fluid that surrounds the bowel may trickle down and collect in the scrotum.

Shared decision making and informed consent

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your child should no longer have the hydrocele. Surgery should prevent your child from having discomfort or embarrassment caused by having the hydrocele or it getting larger as he gets older. In some cases hydroceles become hernias so the procedure will stop this from happening.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

A hydrocele improves over time, as the connection will often close within the first few years of life. Surgery is usually recommended if the connection has not closed by the time your child is 2 to 3 years old.

What does the procedure involve?

The procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes about an hour.

Your surgeon will make a cut on the groin.

Your surgeon will find the connection, which is stuck on to the blood vessels that supply the testicle and on to the vas, the tube that will carry sperm away from the testicle. Your surgeon will peel the connection away from these tubes before tying it off.

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

General complications of any procedure

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)

- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication

Specific complications of this procedure

- Developing a collection of blood or fluid under the wound or in the scrotum
- Damage to nerves that supply the skin around the groin
- Damage of the blood supply to the testicle
- Recurrence of the hydrocele.
- Damage to the vas. This is rare.

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of the skin

What happens after the procedure?

He should be able to go home the same day.

Your child will usually be well enough to return to school after around 3 days.

Most children make a full recovery and can return to normal activities.

Summary

A hydrocele is a common condition where fluid collects around a testicle. Surgery is usually recommended if a hydrocele continues beyond the second year of life. If left untreated, a hydrocele can get larger and is unlikely to get better.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

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