Scrotal operations - patient information leaflet

Why would you need scrotal surgery?

There are two main conditions of the scrotum which would need an operation
- Epididymal cyst
- Hydrocele

Epididymal cyst

An epididymal cyst is a fluid filled swelling (on one or both sides of the scrotum) arising from the epididymis, this is part of the tube which carries sperm from the testicle. Cysts are common and usually do not require treatment. However, if the cyst gets very large or uncomfortable, the surgeon may suggest you have the cyst removed. Further cysts may appear at a later date and may require the procedure to be performed again.

The operation involves a small cut in the scrotum to allow removal of the cyst.

Hydrocele

A hydrocele is a swelling arising from fluid collecting around the testicle in the scrotum. It usually affects only one side of the scrotum, although both sides can be affected.

What are the risks and complications?

Minor
- slight oozing of blood from operation site
- bruising of the scrotum
- infection at the operation site

Moderately Severe
- bleeding into scrotum leading to abscess formation

Major
- chronic pain after your operation (this applies to epididymal cyst excision only and would be very rare).
- Damage to testicular blood supply leading to shrinkage or loss of the testicle (epididymal cyst surgery only)
- Scarring in head of testicle leading to fertility problems (epididymal cyst surgery only)

How will a scrotal operation be carried out?

Both procedures can be performed under local anaesthetic (injected directly into the area) or general anaesthetic (when you are asleep). If you are having a general anaesthetic, you will
have a pre-screening appointment to assess your suitability for day surgery. Generally the operation is carried out as a day case.

**What happens before the operation?**

Prior to admission you will need to have a pre-operative assessment. This is an assessment of your health to make sure you are fully prepared for your admission, treatment and discharge. If you prefer we may be able to do this over the telephone, but you may need to come to the hospital if we need further tests. The pre-operative assessment nurses will help you with any worries or concerns that you have and will give you advice on any preparation needed for your surgery. Before the date of your admission, please read very closely the instructions given to you. If you are undergoing a general anaesthetic you will be given specific instructions about when to stop eating and drinking, please follow these carefully, otherwise this may pose an anaesthetic risk and may mean we will have to cancel your surgery. You should bath or shower before coming to hospital. On admission a member of the nursing staff will welcome you. The nurses will look after you and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to change into a theatre gown.

The surgeon and anaesthetist will visit you and answer any questions that you have. You will be asked to sign a consent form. A nurse will go with you to the anaesthetic room and stay with you until you are asleep. A cuff will be put on your arm, some leads placed on your chest, and a clip attached to your finger. This will allow the anaesthetist to check your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels during the operation. A needle will be put into the back of your hand to give you the drugs to send you to sleep.

**What happens after the operation?**

Your blood pressure, pulse and wound will be monitored closely over the first few hours. You will normally be able to start drinking shortly after the procedure, and can start eating as soon as you are hungry.

You will normally be able to get out of bed a few hours after surgery, although the nurses will assist you the first time. Some pain is to be expected, and can be quite significant. The nurses will give you painkillers and monitor your pain.

A small amount of bleeding is also to be expected. The nurses will monitor the wound site and if necessary provide pads to protect your clothes from marking. If your operation is planned as a day case you can go home as soon as the effect of the anaesthetic has worn off. A general anaesthetic can temporarily affect your coordination and reasoning skills so you will need a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During this time it is also important that you do not operate machinery, drive or make important decisions. Before your discharge the nurse will advise you about your post-operative care and will give you a supply of painkillers as required. Your GP will be notified of your treatment.

If a hospital follow-up appointment is required you will be notified of this prior to discharge and the appointment card will be posted to you.
Recovery following your scrotal surgery

You will be prescribed painkillers to take home with you. Please take only as directed on the packaging. The stitches in your wound will be dissolvable, and usually do not require removal. The nurse will inform you of this before you leave the unit. If they do not dissolve, or become uncomfortable, you may need to see your practice nurse at your GP surgery to have them removed.

You may experience some bruising or swelling. If you are not healing well enough then you should contact your own GP. There is no need for a dressing, but a bath or shower and daily change of underwear is required. You should wear the scrotal support provided, or close fitting underpants, to give support. (Washing of the scrotal support can be done in the same way as normal underwear). The support should be used until any bruising or swelling has gone. You may have intercourse as soon as you feel comfortable. You may need one-two weeks off work and should not do any heavy lifting for 7 to 10 days. Contact sports are to be avoided for approximately 4 weeks.

Please contact your GP if you develop:

- a temperature
- fresh bleeding or bruising
- redness or swelling at the operation site
- pus or drainage from the operation site
- prolonged or severe pain

Where should I seek advice or help?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Telephone numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>During the hours of 8am -8pm contact the Day Surgery Unit, North East NHS Surgery Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the hours of 8pm -8am contact Level 2, North East NHS Surgery Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main switchboard</td>
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The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can provide help, advice and support to patients, relatives or carers who have any questions or concerns regarding their health care. PALS are unable to give medical advice. You can contact PALS on free phone 0800 953 0667. Monday - Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm. An answer phone is available outside of these hours and calls will be returned the next working day.

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is
This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request