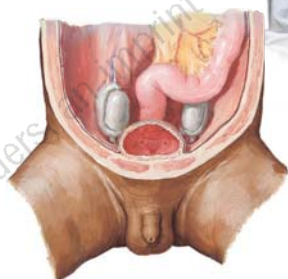
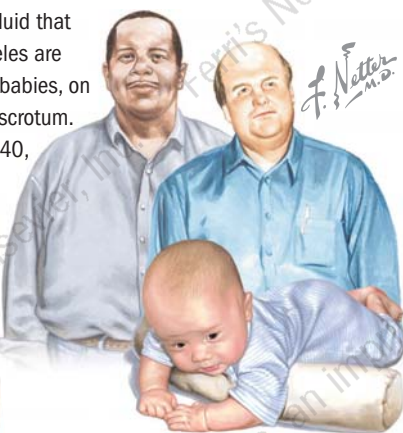


MANAGING YOUR HYDROCELE

A hydrocele is a sac of clear fluid that forms in the scrotum. Hydroceles are most often found in newborn babies, on one side or both sides of the scrotum. Also, men, usually older than 40, can have hydroceles.

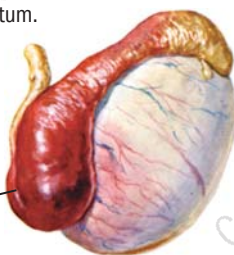


Hydroceles can also be caused by infections, inflammation, radiation therapy, and injuries. They're not contagious.

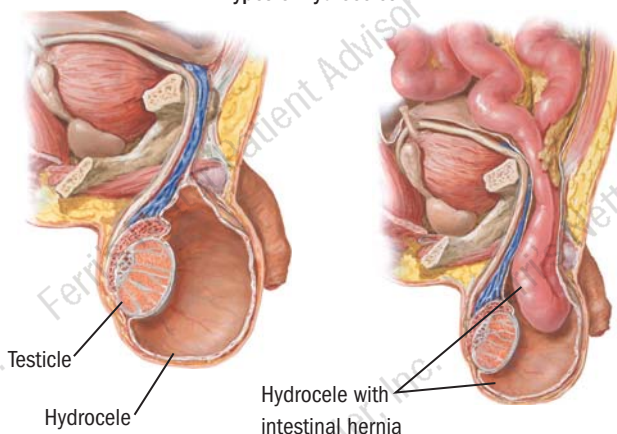


In babies, hydroceles are usually caused during development. Testicles don't move properly from the lower abdomen down into the scrotum.

Inflammation of epididymis



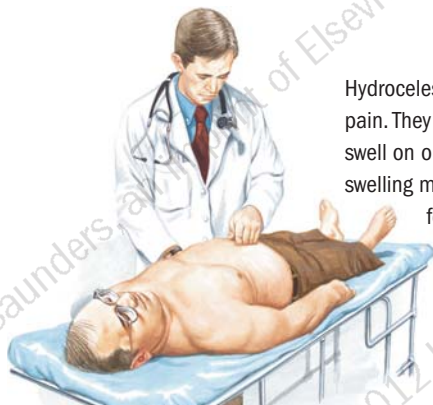
Types of hydroceles



Testicle

Hydrocele

Hydrocele with intestinal hernia



Hydroceles generally don't cause pain. They cause the scrotum to swell on one or both sides. This swelling makes the scrotum feel like a water-filled balloon. Your doctor makes a diagnosis from a physical examination. Ultrasonography may be done if the diagnosis is unclear.

What Is a Hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a sac of clear fluid that develops in the scrotum, the loose pouch of skin that holds the testicles. Hydroceles are most often found in newborn babies. They can be on one side or both sides of the scrotum. In babies, most hydroceles go away on their own. Also, men, usually older than 40, can have hydroceles. No way to prevent hydroceles is known.

What Causes a Hydrocele?

In babies, hydroceles are usually caused during the baby's development. As babies develop, the testicles should move from the lower abdomen (belly) into the scrotum. Each testicle moves in a sac with fluid around it. Usually, the sac closes and the fluid moves back into the body. If fluid remains after the sac closes, one type of hydrocele forms. Sometimes, the sac may not close completely, and another type of hydrocele forms. Hydroceles can also be caused by infections, inflammation, radiation therapy, and injuries. Hydroceles aren't contagious or hereditary.

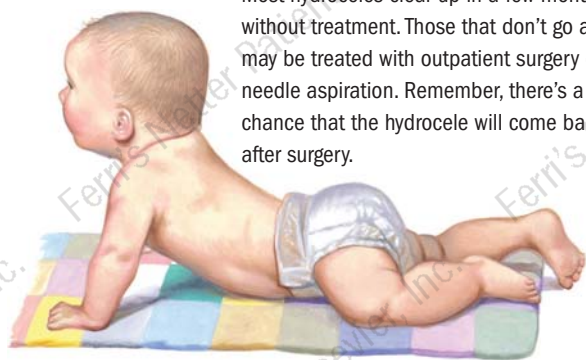
What Are the Symptoms of a Hydrocele?

Hydroceles generally don't cause much pain. They do cause the scrotum to get swollen on one or both sides. This swelling makes the scrotum feel like a balloon filled with water.

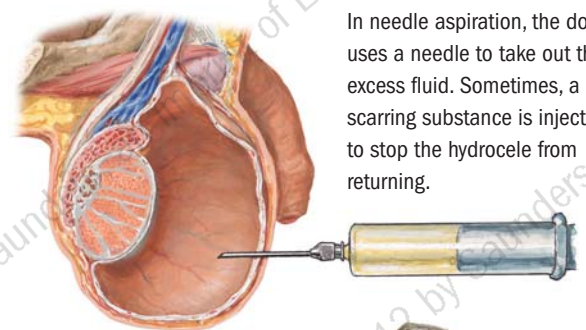
How Is a Hydrocele Diagnosed?

The doctor will make a diagnosis from a physical examination of the scrotal area. Sometimes, the doctor will order ultrasonography of the scrotum to diagnose a hydrocele. Ultrasonography is a test that uses sound waves to get pictures of inside the body. It's important to find out whether a hydrocele or another more serious problem (such as testicular torsion or a tumor) is present.

MANAGING YOUR HYDROCELE

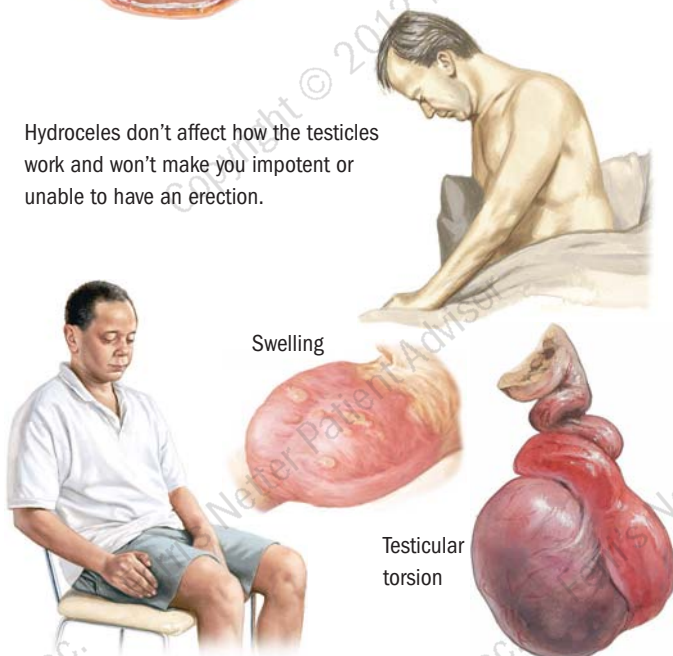


Most hydroceles clear up in a few months without treatment. Those that don't go away may be treated with outpatient surgery or needle aspiration. Remember, there's a small chance that the hydrocele will come back after surgery.



In needle aspiration, the doctor uses a needle to take out the excess fluid. Sometimes, a scarring substance is injected to stop the hydrocele from returning.

Hydroceles don't affect how the testicles work and won't make you impotent or unable to have an erection.



Call your doctor if you have pain or swelling of a testicle or feel a lump on a testicle. The doctor should check for other causes of lumps, including spermatoceles, testicular torsion, and testicular cancers.

How Is a Hydrocele Treated?

Most hydroceles clear up in a few months with no treatment. Those that don't go away in that time may be treated with surgery. Surgery can be done as an outpatient operation. Either spinal or local anesthesia may be needed. Another treatment possibility is aspiration. In this procedure, the doctor sticks a needle into the scrotum and takes out the excess fluid. A urologist (doctor specializing in the genital and urinary system) can do this. Some urologists use aspiration along with injection of scarring agents to prevent the hydrocele from returning. As with any operation, complications of bleeding and infection can occur.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing a Hydrocele:

- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have swelling in the scrotal area.
- ✓ **DO** get the opinion of a urologist if you're thinking of surgery.
- ✓ **DO** remember there's 2% chance that the hydrocele will come back after surgery.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you notice pain or swelling of a testicle or feel a lump on the testicle.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you need a referral to a surgeon (urologist).
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have pain, bleeding, or fever after surgery for a hydrocele.
- ⊗ **DON'T** forget that hydroceles don't affect how the testicles work and won't make you impotent or make you unable to have an erection.
- ⊗ **DON'T** forget to report lumps or swelling to your primary doctor. Other causes of lumps include spermatoceles, testicular torsion, and testicular cancers.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following source:

• American Urological Association

Tel: (866) 746-4282

Website: <http://www.auanet.org>