

△ GENERAL INFORMATION

The two testicles each lie in separate pockets in the *scrotum* (the sac). Each testicle is always making a little fluid that is absorbed by the lining of the sac. If, for some reason, the fluid is not absorbed fast enough, it begins to build up and the scrotum on one side becomes swollen. This swelling can be just a little or fairly large—sometimes the size of a grapefruit. This condition is called a *hydrocele* (Fig. 1).

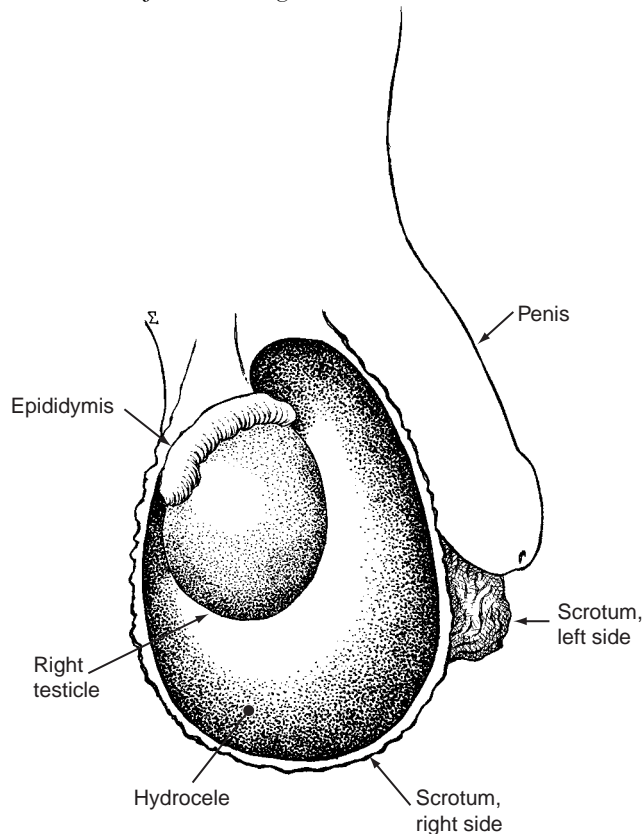


Figure 1. In this operation, the hydrocele is opened and the fluid removed. The sac of the hydrocele is excised almost entirely, and the remainder of it is sutured so that a hydrocele can not reform.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- There is a swelling of one side of the scrotum that is smooth, does not hurt, and feels like a balloon filled with water.

DIAGNOSIS

- Usually, the diagnosis can be made by taking a detailed history and doing a thorough physical examination.
- Ultrasound: Harmless sound waves are aimed at the scrotum. The sound waves bouncing back (the echoes) from this area are seen as a picture on a television screen. This is a convenient, painless, and harmless way to examine the testicles and the other tissues inside the scrotum. This test is done to make certain the testicle is normal and that the swelling is fluid, not a cancerous growth.

○ TREATMENT

- The treatment is an operation to prevent the buildup of fluid.
- The fluid should never just be removed with a needle because of the following:
 - It will just reaccumulate.
 - It may become infected. This would greatly complicate matters.

PREOPERATIVE PREPARATION

- An examination of your blood, urine, heart (EKG), and lungs (chest x-ray) will be done.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the operation.
- Shower (and shave) as usual on the morning of the operation.
- You may be given medicine that will make you feel drowsy before you are brought to the operating room.

□ OPERATION

- You will be asleep for the operation.
- Your genitals will be scrubbed with an antiseptic solution and draped.
- You will not need a blood transfusion.
- The operation usually takes about 1 hour.

POSTOPERATIVE CARE

- You will wake up in a recovery room. When your blood pressure, pulse, and breathing are stable, you will be taken to a regular hospital room and should be able to go home with a responsible adult. Occasionally, it may be necessary for you to remain in the hospital overnight.
- There will be a snug bandage around your scrotum. This may make it look as large as before the operation; don't be concerned.
- That evening you will be helped to sit up in bed and on the next day to get out of bed.
- Pain can be controlled with medicine.
- As with any operation, complications are always possible. Although they are uncommon with your type of operation, they can include bleeding and infection, among others.
- Arrangements will be made for your medicine and follow-up office visit.

✚ HOME CARE

- Walk about as you wish, but lie down 10 minutes every hour or so, if you can. This will help reduce any swelling and also make you feel more comfortable.
- Take medicine as prescribed for your pain.
- You may shower as you wish and with any dressings on or off.
 - There may be narrow strips of tape across the incision. It's all right if they get wet. They will be removed in the doctor's office.

- After you dry yourself, replace any dressings with clean, dry ones.
 - Wearing jockey-type rather than boxer-type shorts is more comfortable and a good way to hold dressings in place.
 - You may drive your car as you wish, provided you are not on any medicines that reduce your alertness.
 - You may return to work when you feel up to it.
- The swelling from the operation may not go down appreciably for 4 to 6 months. Do not be alarmed.

 **CALL OUR OFFICE IF**

- The incision becomes red or swollen, or there is drainage from it.
- You develop a temperature higher than 100°F.
- You have any questions.