

Hydrocele

What Is A Hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a collection of fluid in the scrotum, the sac surrounding the testicles. It is commonly seen in newborns but also in older boys and adult men. In most cases, hydroceles are painless and benign, although they can cause discomfort or swelling.

Symptoms

- **Swelling:** Noticeable swelling in one or both sides of the scrotum.
- **Discomfort:** A feeling of heaviness or discomfort in the scrotum.
- **Pain:** Hydroceles may sometimes cause a dull ache or pressure.
- **Size fluctuation:** The size of the hydrocele may vary, often larger in the evening compared to the morning.
- **Translucency:** When a light is shone through the swollen scrotum, it may appear translucent due to the fluid inside.

Treatment Options

- **Observation:** In infants, hydroceles often resolve on their own within the first year of life without treatment.
- **Surgery:** Surgical removal (hydrocelectomy) is recommended if the hydrocele is large, uncomfortable, or persistent.
- **Aspiration and sclerotherapy:** This involves draining the fluid with a needle and injecting a sclerosing agent to prevent fluid re-accumulation. This is less common and generally considered when surgery is not an option.

Treatment

- **Observation:** Regular follow-up appointments to monitor the hydrocele.
- **Surgery:**
 - **Pre-operative preparation:** Pre-surgical assessments, including blood tests and physical examination.
 - **Procedure:** The surgery is typically performed under general or regional anaesthesia. A small incision is made in the scrotum or lower abdomen to drain the fluid and remove the hydrocele sac.
 - **Post-operative care:** Includes pain management, antibiotics to prevent infection, and instructions for wound care.

Risks Associated With Treatment

- **Infection:** Risk of infection at the site of incision or aspiration.
- **Recurrence:** Hydroceles can recur after aspiration or even after surgery.
- **Injury to nearby structures:** Possible injury to the testicles or other structures in the scrotum during surgery.
- **Bleeding and haematoma:** Post-operative bleeding or formation of a blood clot in the scrotum.
- **Anaesthesia risks:** Complications related to the use of anaesthesia.

Recovery

- **Initial recovery:** Most patients can go home the same day or the following day. Pain and swelling are managed with medications.
- **Activity restrictions:** Patients are advised to avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting for several weeks.
- **Follow-up:** Follow-up visits to monitor healing and ensure there are no complications.
- **Full recovery:** Typically, full recovery can take a few weeks. Most patients can return to normal activities within 4 to 6 weeks.

Why Choose Birmingham Urology Centre

At Birmingham Urology Centre our experienced urologists provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment for hydroceles. We use the latest diagnostic tools and techniques to ensure accurate diagnosis and effective treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs.

Contact us today to book an appointment or for more information on hydroceles and treatment options.