

Hydrocele in the Adult Male

A PATIENT'S GUIDE



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What is a Hydrocele?

A hydrocele is the swelling of the scrotum caused by a fluid-filled sac that develops around one or both testicles. This condition is most common in infants assigned male at birth but can develop in adulthood, although rare.

A hydrocele that develops in adolescence and adulthood is often caused by an injury of the scrotum during sports or physical activity. Sometimes, a hydrocele can be caused by an infection of the scrotum.

Symptoms of a Hydrocele

In most men, hydroceles are painless and cause little to no symptoms. However, a large hydrocele and the swelling around the testicles can cause discomfort, especially during physical activity. The main symptoms of a hydrocele in adult males include:

- Swelling around the scrotum
- Discomfort or pain around the testicles and scrotum
- A feeling of heaviness caused by the fluid-filled sac around the scrotum

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should be examined by a healthcare professional.

Diagnosing a Hydrocele

A physical exam is the most common way to diagnose a hydrocele. Your provider will examine the swelling around the scrotum and may apply light pressure to the affected area to assess the swelling and to see if you have any discomfort. Your provider may shine a light on the scrotal sac to check for fluid.

In some cases, a pelvic ultrasound may be ordered. An ultrasound uses painless sound waves to create images of the tissues in the groin area to check for fluid build-up or inflammation.

Treatment for Hydrocele

If the hydrocele does not resolve on its own in a few weeks, your provider may recommend a hydrocelectomy, a minor, safe surgical procedure to remove or repair the hydrocele that relieves any pain or pressure in the scrotum or testicles.

The simple procedure is typically performed in an outpatient surgery center. Recovery takes one to two days of rest with over-the-counter pain relievers for any discomfort and applications of ice packs at the surgical site to reduce post-surgical swelling. Patients should avoid strenuous activities and sexual intercourse for one to two weeks.

