

HYDROCELE

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What is a hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a swelling in the scrotum caused by a collection of fluid. It can be on one side or can affect both the sides of the scrotum. It is normally present in a few children at birth, and it may disappear in due course of time by its own. However, if it is increasing in size or persists beyond 2 to 3 years of age, it may need treatment.

How is it diagnosed?

It manifests itself as a swollen enlarged testicle which is usually painless; but at times, it may cause some discomfort, as it continues to swell. The doctor will have to shine a light against the testicle which will appear translucent due to the fluid inside the sack.

Causes of a hydrocele

1. Congenital – present since birth
2. Post- traumatic- after an injury
3. Post- infective- after an injury
4. Idiopathic – the cause is unknown

Treatment

Surgical intervention is not always needed as spontaneous cure can occur in early infancy. However, if the hydrocele has not disappeared and is increasing in size rapidly, then surgical treatment is needed. The operation involves making an incision in the scrotal sac or groin and removing the fluid from the sac, thus reducing the testicle back to its normal size. This procedure is done under general anesthesia, which means your child is made to sleep for the whole procedure. During the procedure, an additional caudal block (an injection in the tail end of his spine) may be given to keep your son pain free and this may cause him to be unsteady on his feet when he first awakes. The operation may leave son with a small scar in his groin, which usually heals without any distress.