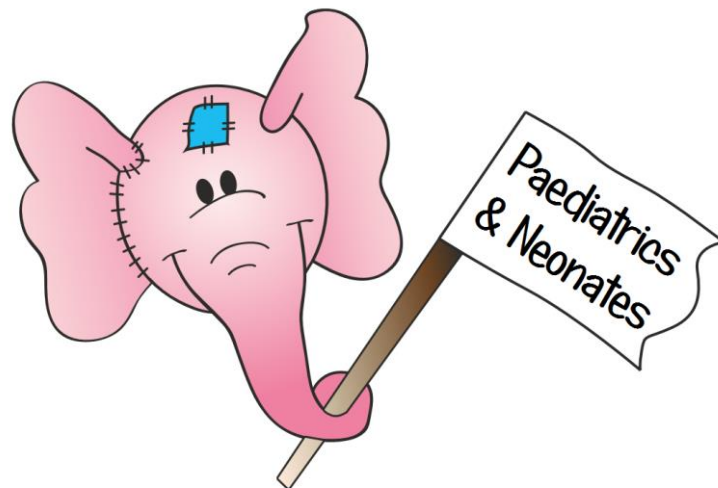


# Hydrocele repair

## Children's Ward

## Parent/Carer Information Leaflet



### Introduction

Your doctor has recommended that your son has a hydrocele repair. This leaflet is for parents who are considering this operation for their child. It gives information on what the operation involves and what to expect after it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a member of the Children's Ward.

## What is a hydrocele?

A hydrocele is a collection of fluid in the scrotum. During development in the womb, babies' testes initially grow in the abdomen then move down a passage into the scrotum. Sometimes the passage that allows this does not close completely, leading to fluid build-up.

Alternatively, fluid may have leaked before the passage seals, causing a hydrocele to occur.

## What is a hydrocele repair?

In many cases, during the first years of life the passageway may close spontaneously and so the hydrocele goes away without any treatment being required. If your child's hydrocele does not go away on its own, an operation will be offered.

The operation to correct the hydrocele is carried out under general anaesthetic (when your child is put to sleep for the operation either by gases or injections of anaesthetic drugs).

The surgeon will make a small cut in the groin area and locate and close the passageway from the groin to the tummy. The wound is then closed with stitches. If your son has a hydrocele on both sides, both sides can be operated on at the same time.

## What are the benefits?

The benefits of the surgery are that it removes the trapped fluid and will restore any irregular shape and swelling of the scrotum.

## What are the alternatives?

The alternative to surgery is not having the operation. A hydrocele is usually painless and has no long term effects. There is also no effect on fertility if your son does not have the operation.

## What are the risks?

As with all operations, there are some rare risks. You can discuss these with your son's doctor in more detail.

**Wound infection:** if your child's wound becomes red, there is increased tenderness, or the wound starts to leak fluid, contact your GP or your surgeon for some antibiotics.

**Recurrence of the hydrocele (it can come back):** this will require another operation.

**Injury to the sperm tube (vas):** please note this will not prevent your child from fathering children later on in life.

**Injury to the blood vessels of the testicles:** this will cause reduced blood supply to the testicle leading to shrinking of testicle. This should not affect your child's future growth and future chances of having children.

**Testicular ascent** (where scar tissue under the skin will pull testicles up to the groin): this will require another operation.

There are some rare risks associated with a general anaesthetic which you will be able to discuss with your son's anaesthetist before the operation.

## **What happens when my son has the operation?**

You will have an appointment for the morning or the afternoon.

When you arrive at the Children's Ward, a nurse will ask you some questions and assess your child's:

- blood pressure
- heart rate
- breathing rate

The nurse will put a wrist band on each of your child's wrists and put a numbing cream on the back of their hands. This is used so that when the anaesthetist puts a cannula into their hand to give the anaesthetic, they will not feel this being put in. A cannula is a thin, plastic tube.

The surgeon will come and see you to explain the operation. If you want your child to have the operation, the surgeon will ask you to sign a consent form.

The anaesthetist will come and see your child to check that they are well enough to have the operation.

The nurse will be able to give you a rough idea of the time your child will have the operation. We try to minimise delays as much as possible but sometimes these occur.

If you have any questions or worries, please ask the nurse who is looking after your child.

When it is time for your child's operation, one parent can go with them to the anaesthetic room and stay until they are asleep. On waking, a nurse will bring your child back to you on the ward, when the recovery team are happy with them.

During the recovery period on the ward, the nursing team will assess your child and offer them something to eat and drink, when it is safe to do so.

Your child may still have a cannula in when they come back to the ward. We recommend that this is kept in until your child goes home. This can be used to give your child medicine, if they need it. For example, some people feel sick or are sick after having a general anaesthetic. If your child feels sick, please tell the nurse and we can give them some anti-sickness medicine.

## Will my son be in pain?

Your son may experience pain after the operation. He will be given pain relief during the operation and after as required. Your son may also be given a penile block or a local anaesthetic, which may make him unsteady on his feet for a few hours after the operation.

You will need to give your son painkillers at home. We recommend getting simple pain control such as paracetamol, if suitable for your child (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose). Brand names of this include Calpol, Disprol and Medinol.

Please contact your GP if your child:

- continues to experience a lot of pain
- develops a temperature
- starts being sick
- is generally unwell

## When can my son go home?

We hope that your son will be in hospital just for the day but please bring an overnight bag in case your son has to stay. One parent is welcome to stay overnight with their child.

Before they can go home, your child will need to have:

- Eaten an adequate amount of food and drink
- Had no bleeding
- Passed urine
- Stopped being sick
- A normal temperature
- The doctor's approval to go home

We recommend that your child does not travel home on public transport due to the risk of infection.

## How do I care for my son after his operation?

Your son will have stitches at the bottom of his scrotum. As the wound heals, it may feel itchy, tingly, lumpy or numb and may pull slightly around the stitches. This is normal and part of the healing process. It will be more comfortable for your son to wear loose fitting clothing.

Your child may have dissolvable or removable stitches. We will tell you which type of stitches your son has before you leave hospital.

To help reduce the risk of infection and maintain hygiene, your son should have a daily bath. It is advisable not to add anything to the bath water like salt, bubble bath etc. If your son has dissolvable stitches, it is advisable for him not to soak in the bath for long periods as this will weaken the stitches and prolong the healing process.

We will give you a practice nurse referral letter for your son so you can make an appointment at their GP surgery to have a wound check one week after the operation. If your son has removable stitches, it is likely the nurse will remove them at this check-up.

You will also need to observe your son's wound for signs of infection such as:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Discharge

Your son may also have a high temperature. If your son has any of these symptoms, he is in a lot of pain and/or if the wound site is bleeding, contact the Children's Ward or your GP. If bleeding is severe, please take your son to your nearest Emergency Department.

### **When should my child return to school and activities?**

We recommend that your son stays away from school until after their wound check one week after the operation. Your son should not take part in sports and boisterous activities for four weeks to allow the healing process to take place.

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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