

Patient information from Gordon Muir, Consultant Urological Surgeon

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Epididymal Cysts

Epididymal cysts are swellings of the sperm collecting tubes around the head of the testis. The condition is completely benign but it may worry some men who think there may be a cancer present. Physical examination backed up with an ultrasound scan will always give a clear diagnosis.

While epididymal cysts may be tender they usually cause no discomfort but can be unsightly or get in the way. If there is uncertainty as to whether testicular pain is related to a cyst it is a simple matter to remove the fluid through a tiny needle (this requires no anaesthesia and is done in the clinic). If the pain is unchanged the cyst is unlikely to be the culprit.

In general, an operation should be avoided until a man is certain he has completed his family as there is always a risk of scar formation in the area of the tubules causing a blockage to the flow of sperm on that side.

Surgical removal of epididymal cysts

- Surgery, if needed, is a simple procedure which can be done under local or general anaesthesia depending on your preference. Most men prefer general anaesthetic but it is an individual choice. Being asleep may be a better option if the cysts are very large.
- It involves a small cut in the skin of the scrotum via which the testicle is exposed. The cyst is then carefully removed from the epididymis and it is then sewn back together using dissolving stitches.
- The wound is then closed with dissolving stitches.

What To Expect After The Operation

- You will need a few hours to recover prior to going home. You may also have some discomfort from the surgery, however, we will endeavour to ensure you are comfortable at all times.
- There may be a little oozing of blood from the wound in the scrotum and this is of no concern. Unless otherwise instructed, you may remove the wound dressing after 48 hours and bathe normally. It is, however, advisable to avoid soap, bath oils, talcum powder etc until the wound has healed.
- You will be given painkillers to take home with you; the degree of pain is usually only moderate. It is important to rest for a few days after surgery and you must avoid cycling or riding for at least two weeks. The stitches dissolve naturally and the long-term outcome will usually be checked after about six weeks at a follow-up appointment.