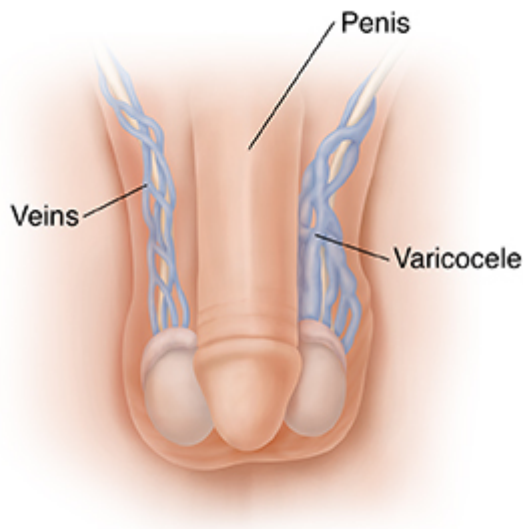


## Treating Varicocele



A varicocele is when the veins in your scrotum are enlarged. The scrotum is the pouch of skin that holds your testicles. A varicocele is like the varicose veins found in legs but it's in the scrotum.



In most cases, a varicocele isn't serious. Your healthcare provider may wait and watch the problem for a while. If needed, surgery or another procedure is done to close off the enlarged veins. This may be advised if:

- You have pain
- You don't like how the veins look
- You and your partner are having trouble getting pregnant

### Open varicocelectomy

Your healthcare provider may advise surgery to tie off the enlarged veins around the testicles:

- You're given general anesthesia to allow you to comfortably sleep during the procedure.
- A cut (incision) is made in the groin or in the lower belly.
- The veins are then cut and tied off.
- The cut is closed with stitches, staples, or surgical tape.

### Laparoscopic varicocelectomy

Instead of open surgery, laparoscopic surgery may be advised. This is a minimally invasive surgery done through a few tiny cuts. It uses a thin tool (laparoscope):

- You're given general anesthesia. This will allow you to comfortably sleep during the procedure.
- A few small cuts are made in the lower belly. The laparoscope is put in through 1 cut. Tiny surgical tools are put in through the other small cuts.

- The laparoscope sends enlarged pictures to a computer screen. Using these pictures, the surgeon finds the veins that need treatment.
- The veins are clamped to seal them off.
- The tools are taken out. The cuts are closed with stitches, staples, or surgical tape.

## Microsurgical varicocelectomy

This is another type of minimally invasive surgery that uses a microscope to help identify the veins to be removed. This is done through a small incision in the groin.

- You're given general anesthesia. This will allow you to comfortably sleep during the procedure.
- A small cut is made in the groin. Using a microscope the surgeon cuts and ties off small veins.
- The cut is closed with stitches, staples, or surgical tape.

This surgery takes about 30 to 40 minutes. You can go home on the same day.

## Percutaneous embolization

In place of surgery, your healthcare provider might advise sealing and blocking the blood flow to the enlarged veins. This is done using percutaneous embolization. A radiologic procedure called a venogram is used to make a map of the veins. A tube is then placed in the large vein in the groin. Materials are injected through this tube into the enlarged veins to block them off using X-ray guidance.

## After your varicocele procedure

- You may feel some pain in your testicle for a few days.
- Mild swelling and bruising is expected.
- Mild swelling around the testicle is normal after the procedure. Put an ice pack wrapped in a clean, thin towel on the area to help. Do this for no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- Plan to rest for 5 to 7 days. You should not exercise for 10 to 14 days after the procedure. You can return to work after 5 to 7 days.
- If your surgery was done for fertility issues, your semen will be checked 3 to 4 months after the procedure.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have:

- Ongoing pain not eased by pain medicine
- Black-and-blue around the cut, bleeding from the cut, or swelling in the scrotum
- A fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or above, or as advised by your provider
- Greenish or bad-smelling fluid that leaks from the cut

## Risks of varicocele repair

Risks and possible complications of these procedures include:

- Blood clot
- Infection
- Fluid accumulation around testicle (hydrocele)
- Injury to the nerves in the groin or scrotum
- Injury to scrotal tissue or structures
- Injury to the artery that supplies blood to the testicle
- Risks of general anesthesia, if used
- Damage to belly structures (laparoscopic surgery)

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