

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/CARERS FOLLOWING THEIR CHILD'S SURGERY

HYDROCELE

A hydrocele is a very common condition affecting boys, where a fluid filled sac develops inside the scrotum, making it look swollen. It is not painful and feels like a balloon filled with water. One or both sides of the scrotum can be affected.

While your child was developing in the womb, the testicles were developing inside the abdomen. Towards the end of pregnancy, the testicle travels through a passage into the scrotum. A hydrocele can develop when this passage fails to close, allowing fluid from the abdomen to flow through it to the scrotum. This causes the fluid-filled sac to develop. Hydroceles can be associated with a hernia, but a thorough check up of the groin area will confirm or rule out the chance of a hernia.

Most hydroceles go down within a few months of birth, but occasionally they last longer and need an operation to correct them. If your child also has a hernia, this will be corrected in the same operation. In certain circumstances, the doctor might suggest draining off the fluid using a needle, but it is quite common for the fluid to come back using this method, so an operation is usually preferred.

Following his operation your child will come back to the ward to recover, and will be able to go home once he has had something to eat and drink, has passed urine and is comfortable.

PAIN

After a hydrocele repair your child is likely to suffer some discomfort.

Your child will have been given pain-relieving medications during the operation, but these will begin to wear off. Your child will need to have regular pain relief for at least three days, and we will give you the medications to take home with you. Preventing pain from occurring is easier than relieving it once it has started. As well as the medications, distracting your child by playing games, watching TV or reading together can also help to keep your child's mind off the pain.

VOMITING

Your child may feel sick for the first 24 hours. You should encourage, but not force, him to drink plenty of fluids. It does not matter if he does not feel like eating for the first couple of days, as long as he is drinking plenty of fluids.

CARE OF THE WOUND

Your child's abdomen and scrotum will probably feel sore for a while after the operation, and may look swollen and bruised. This is to be expected and should improve over the next few days.

Some oozing or slight bleeding around the wound site can occur but this usually settles. If the oozing is excessive, the bleeding prolonged or the wound looks red and inflamed please contact the hospital for further advice.

Your child may be most comfortable wearing supportive pants (e.g. 'Y' Fronts as opposed to boxer shorts) to support the scrotum for the first few days.

The stitches used during the operation will dissolve on their own so there is no need to have them removed. If a dressing has been applied e.g. steristrips this can be removed after 3-5 days.

Ideally your child should not ride a bicycle or other sit-on toys for four weeks after the operation, to prevent any undue trauma to the wound. A daily warm bath can be very soothing and will help to keep the wound clean but do not soak the area until the operation site has settled down.

DIFFICULTY IN PASSING URINE

Encourage your child to have plenty of drinks as this will help your child to pass urine.

If your child finds it difficult to pass urine this may be due to apprehension or pain. A warm bath and some prescribed pain killers may help.

If your child has not passed urine for 18-24 hours after the operation please contact the ward for advice.

Regular fluids and a diet rich in fruit and vegetables will also help your child to have a bowel movement without undue straining after the operation.

FOLLOW UP

An outreach nurse from the ward will telephone you the following day wherever possible to check your child is making a good recovery. If indicated a home visit can be arranged to monitor your child's progress. Please tell the nurse the best time to contact you before you leave the ward.

Your child should be able to go back to school within a few days, when he is more comfortable.

Ideally activities and sports should be avoided for four weeks to allow the wound to completely heal.

You and your child will need to come back to hospital for an outpatient appointment within six months of the operation. The appointment will be sent to you in the post.

CONTACTS

If you have any worries or concerns please contact your GP or the ward your child was admitted to.

WARD 15 TELEPHONE NUMBER 0113 2065715