

Hydrocele Repair

Care After Surgery

A hydrocele repair is an operation to keep fluid from collecting around your child's testicles. This handout explains what to expect if your child needs this surgery.

What is a hydrocele?

- A hydrocele is a collection of fluid around the testicle in the scrotum. It is caused by an opening between the belly area (abdomen) and the scrotum that has been present since your child was born (we call this congenital).
 - Fluid drains from the abdomen into the scrotum where it builds up. You may notice that the hydrocele swelling goes down when your child is resting or lying down.
 - When your child gets more active or cries, the hydrocele may get larger. This is normal and commonly seen when a baby has a communicating hydrocele. This means that there is still an opening allowing fluid to shift around the body.
 - A non-communicating hydrocele has already closed and will not have fluid changes throughout the day. For a non-communicating hydrocele, the fluid in the scrotum will decrease gradually on its own over time.
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How is a hydrocele diagnosed?

- Your child's healthcare provider can tell whether your child has a hydrocele during a physical exam.
 - Only children with testicles have hydroceles.
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Why does it need to be repaired?

- Most non-communicating hydroceles go away on their own after a few months as the body absorbs the fluid.
 - If your child still has a communicating hydrocele when they are 1 or 2 years old with continued fluid changes, we plan for surgery, because it will not go away on its own.
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What can I expect from surgery?

- We perform this surgery in the operating room with medicine (general anesthesia), so your child will be fully asleep and not feel pain.
 - We make an incision near the crease between the abdomen and leg (in the inguinal space) and drain the fluid.
 - Then we close the opening into the abdomen with small stitches that dissolve on their own and do not need to be removed.
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When will my child be able to go home?

- Most children go home the day of surgery. If your child has another medical condition, they may need to stay overnight.
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To Learn More

- Urology
206-987-2509
- General Surgery
206 987-0237
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



Where can I watch videos that explain how to care for my child after surgery?

- We created videos to explain how to care for your child after surgery. You can search for these titles on YouTube.
- You may need to login due to age restrictions.

- “How to Care for Your Child After Hernia and Testicular Surgery” [youtube.com/watch?v=kKgsviGyTLE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKgsviGyTLE)



- “How to Care for Your Child After Penile Surgery” [youtube.com/watch?v=ppZeEKY848M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppZeEKY848M)



When can my child eat?



- Start by feeding your child with a light diet.
- When your child is fully awake, you can give clear liquids like 7UP, Jell-O, Popsicles and apple juice.
- It is common for children to feel sick to their stomach (have nausea) and throw up (vomit) after surgery. If this happens, only give your child a small amount of clear liquids at a time.
- If your child is not sick to their stomach or throwing up and is fully awake, start their regular diet.

How do I care for the surgery site?



- We use tissue glue (Dermabond) to cover the incision. This will usually peel off on its own in 10 to 14 days.
- You won't see any stitches on the outside skin. We used small stitches to close the skin that will dissolve over the next month and do not need to be removed.
- The scrotum may be red, darker than normal skin tone or look bruised and swollen to twice normal size after surgery.
- If the bruising or swelling does not go down, please bring your child back in for a clinic appointment.

Can my child take a bath, shower, swim or get wet?



- It is ok to sponge bathe your child after surgery. Avoid showers and baths for 48 hours (2 days) after surgery.
- It is ok for showers or baths after 2 days, but do not soak for longer than 10 minutes.
- It is ok to rinse off poop even if it is before the 2-day bath cutoff.
- No swimming for 2 weeks.

How much activity can my child do?

Watch your child closely on the day of the surgery. Follow the steps below based on your child's age.

If your child is younger than 2 years of age



- Younger children will limit their own crawling, walking and activities.
- Car seats and stroller straps are safe. Use as instructed by the manufacturer.
- **Avoid any straddle activities with your child that would increase pressure between their legs.**
- **For 2 weeks, do not:**
 - Hold your child on your hip
 - Bounce your child on your knee
 - Use baby-wearing devices
 - Use bouncer toys that have a harness

If your child is 2 years of age or older



- Avoid strenuous activities, rough play or activities that involve straddle-activity. A good guideline for your child is to keep “both feet on the ground” for 2 weeks.
- **For 2 weeks, no:**
 - Jungle-gyms and climbing
 - Gym class
 - Bikes and trikes
 - After-school sports

When can my child return to school?

- Your child may return to school when they no longer need opioid pain medicine or frequent daytime over-the-counter pain medicine.

Will my child have pain?

- After surgery your child will likely feel pain in the groin and scrotum.
- We partner with you and your child to relieve pain as much as possible. You know your child best. We encourage you to take an active part in their recovery. No matter the level of your child's pain, believe they are hurting and respond right away. Your child should feel better the next day.

How do I manage my child's pain?



- Effective pain control will help your child feel better and heal faster.
- Start by giving your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) alternating every 3 hours with ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) for the first 2 days after surgery and then you will use it as needed. Use this medication only if recommended by your child's healthcare provider. Check with the healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child. If your child's healthcare provider prescribed an opioid medication for pain, use this if the acetaminophen or ibuprofen does not help relieve pain.
- Tylenol and opioid pain medicine may not be safe to use at the same time. For questions, check with your healthcare provider or pharmacy.
- In addition to medicine for pain, you can also help your child cope by distracting them with music, games, TV or videos.

How do I dispose of leftover opioid pain medication?

- To keep your family safe, store medicines inside a locked cabinet or location where others cannot easily get to them. Once your child has recovered from surgery, dispose of all unused prescription medicines. Taking leftover pain or other medicines on purpose or by accident, can be very dangerous.
- For more information about safe disposal of unused opioid medications, read our handout “Safe Use and Disposal of Opioid Medicines” seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE3140.pdf or visit takebackyourmeds.org to find a take back place near you.

When do I call?



Monday to Friday, call the Urology Clinic at **206-987-2509** for questions or any of the concerns listed below. Send MyChart messages for non-urgent questions.

Nights, weekends and holidays, call **206-987-2000** and ask for the urology resident on call for urgent concerns from the following list:

- Fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C) for more than 24 hours
- Spreading redness or fluid (discharge) from the surgery site
- Rapid swelling or bleeding at the surgery site
- Severe pain not controlled by the medicine prescribed
- Vomiting 4 or more times in 12 hours
- Cannot pee for a span of 8 hours after surgery
- Throwing up (vomiting)