

Scrotal lumps

The scrotum contains two testicles and their spermatic cords plus muscle and other soft tissue. Lumps that develop in the scrotum are quite common and cause anxiety when detected but most are not serious. The lumps can be considered as:

- solid such as cancer of the testicle and orchitis (inflammation of the testicle)
- cystic such as a cyst of the testicle and hydroceles
- lumps coming down from the abdomen (e.g. inguinal hernia).

The lumps can be diagnosed by clinical examination plus the ultrasound investigation which gives an accurate diagnosis. Any lump in the testicle should be investigated for cancer which is an uncommon cause of a lump in the scrotum. The common lumps are as follows.

Hydrocele

A *hydrocele* is a large soft swelling that completely surrounds the testicle.

Features

- Caused by a collection of clear sterile fluid
- Can be huge in size
- Often the cause is unknown but may follow an injury or testicular cancer
- Occurs in males of any age especially baby boys and in older men
- Usually causes no symptoms but may cause a dragging discomfort
- Usually harmless and men learn to live with it

Treatment

A simple operation is the best way to remove a troublesome hydrocele.

In elderly men it is common to aspirate the fluid with a needle and syringe. This can be repeated as necessary as they tend to keep filling up with the serous fluid.

Varicocele

A *varicocele* is a soft swelling or lump that surrounds the testicle. It is due to a large knot of varicose veins.

Features

- Almost always on the left side
- Caused by distension of the vein that drains the testicle, due to a faulty valve
- Lump is more noticeable when standing, usually disappearing on lying
- May be no discomfort but some men feel a dragging discomfort, even pain, especially after exercise and in hot weather
- Linked with infertility in men but not proven

Treatment

No treatment is necessary if it causes no discomfort. Firm-fitting underpants or jockstrap can be used for mild discomfort and swelling. Surgery, which is straight-

forward, is recommended for significant discomfort or if associated with reduced size of the left testicle or with infertility.

Cyst of epididymis of testicle

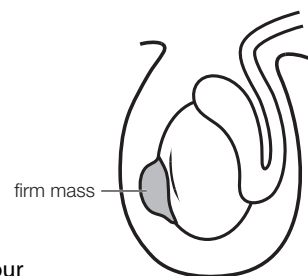
The *epididymis* is a sac that is connected to the testicle and lies just behind it. These cysts are common and usually harmless.

Features

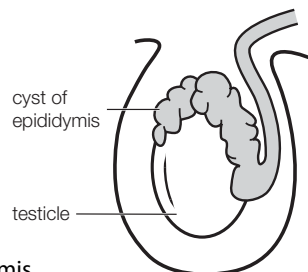
- Usually in middle-aged to elderly men
- Contains a clear fluid or sperm
- May or may not cause discomfort which is a dragging sensation

Treatment

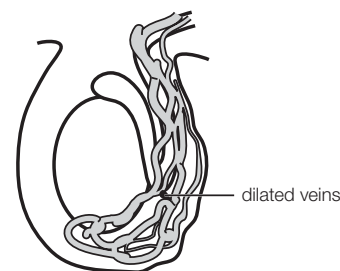
No treatment is usually required and they can be left alone. Surgical excision is advisable if uncomfortable or unsightly. Needle aspiration is also an option.



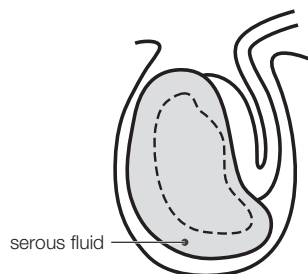
Testicular tumour



Cyst of epididymis



Varicocele



Hydrocele