Spermatocele

A spermatocele (SPUR-muh-toe-seal) is an abnormal sac (cyst) that develops in the epididymis — the small, coiled tube located on the upper testicle that collects and transports sperm. Generally painless and noncancerous, a spermatocele usually is filled with milky or clear fluid that may contain sperm.

The exact cause of spermatoceles is unknown but may be due to a blockage in one of the tubes that drains sperm.

Spermatoceles, sometimes called spermatic cysts, are common. They typically do not reduce fertility or require treatment. If a spermatocele grows large enough to cause discomfort, your doctor may suggest surgery.

Although your spermatocele probably won't go away on its own, most spermatoceles don't need treatment. They generally don't cause pain or complications. If yours is painful, your doctor may recommend that you take over-the-counter pain medications, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, others).

Surgical treatment

A procedure called a spermatocelectomy generally is performed on an outpatient basis, using local or general anesthetic. The surgeon makes an incision in the scrotum and separates the spermatocele from the epididymis.

After surgery, you may need to wear a gauze-filled athletic supporter to apply pressure to and protect the site of the incision. Your doctor may also tell you to:

- Apply ice packs for two or three days to keep swelling down
- Take oral pain medications for a day or two
- Return for a follow-up exam about two weeks after surgery

Possible complications from surgical removal that might affect fertility include damage to the epididymis or to the tube that transports sperm (vas deferens). It's also possible that a spermatocele may come back, even after surgery.

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The information should not be used in place of a visit, call, consultation or advice of your physician, nurse or other health care provider.

The information obtained herein is not exhaustive and does not cover all aspects of the specific disease, ailment, physical condition or their treatments.

Should you have any health care related questions, please call or see your physician, nurse or other health care provider promptly.