



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

An inflammation and infection of the epididymis. These are thin-walled tubes at the top of a man's testicles. They carry sperm from the testicles to the vas deferens. The vas deferens is another tube that carries the sperm from the testicle to the prostate before ejaculation. Epididymitis more often affects men ages 19 to 35.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain, heat, redness, and swelling at the back or top of one testicle (sometimes both).
- Fever and chills.
- Pain or burning with urination.
- Discharge from the penis (sometimes).

CAUSES

- Infection in the urinary tract or the prostate.
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Amiodarone (a heart drug).
- Intense exercise, such as heavy lifting, may be a cause.
- A whole body infection that spreads through the bloodstream to the epididymis.
- Sometimes, no cause is found.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Recent urethral or urinary tract infection.
- Abnormalities or recent surgery involving the genitals or urinary tract.
- Unsafe sexual practices that lead to STDs.
- Catheter (use of a tube to carry urine from the body).
- Presence of a foreskin (being uncircumcised).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Practice safe sex or abstain from sexual activity.
- Avoid catheters if possible.
- Practice good hygiene, especially if uncircumcised.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable with treatment. Pain often goes away in 1 to 3 days. Complete healing may take several weeks.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Abscess (pus-filled area).
- May become sterile (unable to father children) if untreated.
- The disorder may become chronic.
- Infection of the testicles or infection spreads into the bloodstream, or, rarely, a severe scrotal infection.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do an exam of the genitals. Medical tests usually include urine or discharge studies to check for bacteria or sexually transmitted diseases. Blood studies or ultrasound may also be done.
- The goal of treatment is to cure the infection and reduce pain and swelling. Treatment can usually be done at home with rest, drugs and self-care.
- Support the weight of the scrotum and tender testicles. Roll a soft bath towel and place it between the legs under the inflamed area.
- Apply an ice bag (wrapped in a cloth) to the inflamed parts to help reduce swelling and relieve pain. Do this for 10 to 15 minutes at a time several times a day. Don't use heat.
- Wear an athletic supporter or two pairs of athletic briefs when you return to normal activity.
- Surgery may be recommended in cases of blockage or narrowing of the urethra, or for an abscess.

MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotics will be prescribed for infection. They may be given by injection or taken orally.
- Use ibuprofen or naproxen for mild pain and inflammation. Stronger drugs may be prescribed for more severe pain.
- Stool softeners may be used to prevent constipation.

ACTIVITY

Rest in bed until fever, pain, and swelling improve. Don't engage in sexual intercourse. Wait at least 1 month (or as advised) after all symptoms disappear before resuming sexual relations.

DIET

Eat natural laxative foods, such as prunes, fresh fruit, whole-grain cereals, and nuts, to prevent constipation.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of epididymitis.
- Pain is not relieved by treatment.
- You develop severe scrotal pain, urinary pain or a discharge, fever, chills, or you become constipated.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page