

## **MANAGING YOUR EPIDIDYMITIS**

### **What Is Epididymitis?**

Epididymitis is an infection or inflammation (swelling) of the epididymis. The epididymis is a tube at the upper part of each testicle that carries sperm to the tube called the vas deferens, which takes the sperm out. Epididymitis is curable with treatment.

### **What Causes Epididymitis?**

The cause is usually a bacterial infection or long-term pressure on the epididymis. Bacteria from a urinary tract or prostate infection can spread to the testicles. In sexually active men, a sexually transmitted disease (STD) is often the cause. Pressure epididymitis occurs after sitting too long, such as when driving a car or riding a bicycle for long periods. Injury and urinary tract blockage are other causes. The cause is often unknown.

### **What Are the Symptoms of Epididymitis?**

Symptoms include pain, swelling, and tenderness in the scrotum; a burning feeling when urinating; discharge from the penis; fever; and pain during sex. Swelling may last for several days.

### **How Is Epididymitis Diagnosed?**

The health care provider will ask about symptoms and examine the penis and scrotum. The health care provider may order a urinalysis and a blood test to look for infection. The health care provider may also take a sample of discharge from the penis, to be checked with a microscope. A sonogram (ultrasound) of the painful testicle may be done to exclude other causes of the pain and swelling.

## How Is Epididymitis Treated?

Antibiotics will be given for a bacterial infection. Over-the-counter drugs, such as ibuprofen, can help pain. Stronger medicine may be needed for moderate to severe pain. Scrotal rest is advised. This means getting pressure off this area by leaning back, as if sitting in a lawn chair. An ice pack on the area will help swelling and discomfort. A rolled towel under the scrotum helps support and elevate it and reduces swelling and pain. Pain usually begins to go away 1 to 3 days after starting antibiotics or scrotal rest.

Sex should be avoided for several days after symptoms go away.

In rare cases, surgery may be needed for complications of infection.

## DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Epididymitis

- ✓ **DO** rest until fever, swelling, and pain improve.
- ✓ **DO** put a soft, rolled towel under the scrotum while in bed.
- ✓ **DO** apply an ice pack to the scrotal area.
- ✓ **DO** wear an athletic supporter when your activity increases.
- ✓ **DO** take antibiotics until they are finished.
- ✓ **DO** take nonprescription pain medicine.
- ✓ **DO** use condoms to prevent STD infection.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you get a high fever during treatment, if nonprescription drugs don't control your pain, or if you become severely constipated.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if your symptoms don't improve in 3 or 4 days after you start treatment.

⊗ **DON'T** skip doses or stop your antibiotics even if you feel better.

⊗ **DON'T** have sex for several days after symptoms go away.

FROM THE DESK OF

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following source:

- American Urological Association: Tel: (866) 746-4282; Website: <http://www.auanet.org>

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