

MANAGING YOUR ORCHITIS

What Is Orchitis?

Orchitis is inflammation (swelling) of one or both testes in the scrotum.

Most cases go away without complications. Very rarely, sterility can result.

What Causes Orchitis?

Different factors, including viruses and bacteria, cause orchitis. One common cause is mumps, the childhood disease that involves swelling of glands that make saliva. However, when teenage boys get the mumps, they can also get orchitis. About 15% to 25% of adults and teenagers who get the mumps also get orchitis.

Urinary tract infections, multiple sexual partners, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhea and chlamydia can also lead to orchitis.

What Are the Symptoms of Orchitis?

Common symptoms include pain and swelling in the scrotum, nausea, fever, pain when urinating, a heavy feeling on the affected side, scrotum that is tender to touch, and pain with sex. Swelling may last for several weeks after the infection is gone.

How Is Orchitis Diagnosed?

The health care provider will do a complete physical examination, take a medical history, and may do tests to check for infection. These tests may include urinalysis, urine culture, and blood tests.

If a discharge is coming from the penis, the health care provider may take a sample of the discharge and send it to a laboratory for study. This test may also help find out if an STD is present.

How Is Orchitis Treated?

Treatment depends on the cause. A bacterial infection usually responds to antibiotics within 2 to 3 days. If the cause is a virus, such as the mumps virus, orchitis will just have to run its course. Antibiotics don't work against viruses. The worst pain should lessen within a few days, but the health care provider may prescribe pain medicine for severe symptoms. Using an athletic supporter and applying cool compresses or ice packs to the affected area may also help with pain.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Orchitis

- ✓ **DO** apply ice packs to the scrotum to help relieve swelling and pain.
- ✓ **DO** wear an athletic supporter, which may help with the pain.
- ✓ **DO** drink plenty of fluids and take over-the-counter medicine for pain relief. If pain is severe, your health care provider may prescribe something stronger.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you have severe pain, high temperature, or trouble urinating.
- ✓ **DO** use latex condoms to prevent being infected with an STD.
- ✓ **DO** talk to your health care provider if you are prone to getting urinary tract infections.

✓ **DO** get vaccinated and have your child vaccinated against mumps to prevent orchitis from mumps. It's given as part of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine during childhood.

⊗ **DON'T** put pressure on your scrotum while it's swollen.

⊗ **DON'T** have unprotected sex if an STD is suspected. Use a condom if you think there's any chance of catching an STD.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following source:

- American Urological Association: Tel: (866) 746-4282; Website: <http://www.auanet.org>
- American Academy of Pediatrics: Tel: (847) 434-4000; Website: <http://www.aap.org>

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