Urology Department

Laparoscopic Varicocele Ligation

What is the evidence base for this information?
This leaflet includes advice from consensus panels, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and evidence based sources; it is, therefore, a reflection of best practice in the UK. It is intended to supplement any advice you may already have been given by your urologist or nurse specialist as well as the surgical team at Addenbrookes. Alternative treatments are outlined below and can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or specialist nurse.

What does the procedure involve?
This involves tying or clipping the testicular veins causing the varicocele swelling in the scrotum by passing a telescope into the abdominal cavity.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?
Observation, radiological embolization or open surgery.

What should I expect before the procedure?
You will usually be admitted on the same day as your surgery. You will normally undergo pre assessment on the day of your clinic or an appointment for pre assessment will be made from clinic, to assess your general fitness, to screen for the carriage of MRSA and to perform some baseline investigations. After admission, you will be seen by members of the medical team which may include the consultant, junior urology doctors and your named nurse.

You will be asked not to eat or drink for six hours before surgery and, immediately before the operation, you may be given a pre-medications by the anaesthetist which will make you dry-mouthed and pleasantly sleepy.

You will need to wear anti-thrombosis stockings during your hospital stay; these help prevent blood clots forming in the veins of your legs during and after surgery.

Please be sure to inform your urologist in advance of your surgery if you have any of the following:
- an artificial heart valve
- a coronary artery stent
- a heart pacemaker or defibrillator
- an artificial joint
Patient Information

- an artificial blood vessel graft
- a neurosurgical shunt
- any other implanted foreign body
- a prescription for Warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor or blood thinning medication
- a previous or current MRSA infection
- high risk of variant CJD (if you have received a corneal transplant, a neurosurgical dural transplant or previous injections of human derived growth hormone)

What happens during the procedure?

Normally, a full general anaesthetic will be used and you will be asleep throughout the procedure. The surgeon will introduce a number of access ports into the abdomen (pictured below). Using a telescope inserted below the umbilicus (belly button), the large veins draining blood from the testicle can be identified, running along the back wall of the abdominal cavity.

The veins are then clipped or tied after which the skin incisions are closed with absorbable stitches.

What happens immediately after the procedure?

You will be given fluids to drink from an early stage after the operation and you will be encouraged to mobilise as soon as you are comfortable to prevent blood clots forming in your legs.

The average hospital stay is one day.

Are there any side effects?

Most procedures have a potential for side effects. You should be reassured that, although all these complications are well recognised, the majority of patients do not suffer any problems after a urological procedure.

Please use the check boxes to tick off individual items when you are happy that they have been discussed to your satisfaction:
Common (greater than one in 10)
- Temporary shoulder tip pain
- Temporary abdominal bloating
- The external appearance of the varicocele may not change significantly although the symptoms are relieved

Occasional (between one in 10 and one in 50)
- Bleeding, infection, pain or hernia of the incision requiring further treatment
- Failure to cure the varicocele
- Development of a fluid swelling (hydrocele) around the testicle at a later stage

Rare (less than one in 50)
- Bleeding requiring conversion to open surgery or requiring blood transfusion
- Recognised (or unrecognised) injury to organs/blood vessels requiring conversion to open surgery (or deferred open surgery)
- Involvement or injury to nearby local structures (blood vessels, spleen, liver, kidney, lung, pancreas, bowel) requiring more extensive surgery
- Damage to or shrinking of the testicle If the blood supply is affected by the operation
- Anaesthetic or cardiovascular problems possibly requiring intensive care admission (including chest infection, pulmonary embolus, stroke, deep vein thrombosis, heart attack and death)

What should I expect when I get home?
Before you leave hospital, the team will ensure you are safe to be discharged home. When you leave hospital, you will be given a discharge summary of your admission. This holds important information about your inpatient stay and your operation. If, in the first few weeks after your discharge, you need to call your GP for any reason or to attend another hospital, please take this summary with you to allow the doctors to see details of your treatment. This is particularly important if you need to consult another doctor within a few days of your discharge.

There may be some discomfort from the small incisions in your abdomen but this can normally be controlled with simple painkillers.

All the wounds are closed with absorbable stitches which do not require removal.

It will take 10 to 14 days to recover fully from the procedure and most people can return to normal activities after two to four weeks.

What else should I look out for?
If you develop a temperature, increased redness, throbbing or drainage at the site of the operation, increasing abdominal pain or dizziness, please contact your GP/ward N2 (01223 256650)/on-call urology specialist registrar (via hospital switchboard 01223 245151) immediately.
Are there any other important points?
A follow up outpatient appointment will normally be arranged for you six to 12 weeks after the operation. This appointment will normally be arranged for you before you go home.

Driving after surgery
It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive following your surgery.
You do not normally need to notify the DVLA unless you have a medical condition that will last for longer than three months after your surgery and may affect your ability to drive. You should, however, check with your insurance company before returning to driving. Your doctors will be happy to provide you with advice on request.

Privacy & Dignity
Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.

Hair removal before an operation
For most operations, you do not need to have the hair around the site of the operation removed. However, sometimes the healthcare team need to see or reach your skin and if this is necessary they will use an electric hair clipper with a single-use disposable head, on the day of the surgery. Please do not shave the hair yourself or use a razor to remove hair, as this can increase the risk of infection. Your healthcare team will be happy to discuss this with you.

References
NICE clinical guideline No 74: Surgical site infection (October 2008); Department of Health: High Impact Intervention No 4: Care bundle to preventing surgical site infection (August 2007)

Is there any research being carried out in this field at Addenbrooke’s Hospital?
All laparoscopic procedures are subject to continuous audit by the British Association of Urological Surgeons Section of Endourology. In addition, the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) requires that we maintain a careful review of laparoscopic procedures.

Who can I contact for more help or information?
Oncology nurses
Uro-oncology nurse specialist
01223 586748

Bladder cancer nurse practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy and BCG)
01223 274608
Prostate cancer nurse practitioner
01223 274608 or 216897 or bleep 154-548

Surgical care practitioner
01223 348590 or 256157 or bleep 154-351

Non-oncology nurses
Urology nurse practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)
01223 274608 or 586748 or bleep 157-237

Urology nurse practitioner (stoma care)
01223 349800

Urology nurse practitioner (stone disease)
01223 349800 or bleep 152-879

Patient Advice and Liaison Centre (PALS)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 216756
PatientLine: *801 (from patient bedside telephones only)
E mail: pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Mail: PALS, Box No 53
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

Chaplaincy and multi faith community
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217769
E mail: chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Mail: The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217589

Access office (travel, parking and security information)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 596060

What should I do with this leaflet?
Thank you for taking the trouble to read this patient information leaflet. If you wish to sign it and retain a copy for your own records, please do so below.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet to be filed in your hospital records for future reference, please let your urologist or specialist nurse know. If you do, however, decide to proceed with the scheduled procedure, you will be asked to sign a separate consent form which will be filed in your hospital notes and you will, in addition, be provided with a copy of the form if you wish.

I have read this patient information leaflet and I accept the information it provides.

Signature........................................Date......................................
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
Authors Mr Nikesh Thiruchelvam (on behalf of the Consultant Urologists)
Pharmacist Eilis Rahill
Department Department of Urology, Box No 43
Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road,
Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk / www.camurology.org.uk
Contact number 01223 256650
Publish/Review date July 2017/July 2020
File name Laparoscopic_varicocele_ligation.doc
Version number/Ref V7/PIN2041/Doc ref 8141
Local Ref number 70/Urol_07_17