

Commissioning Policy

Hydroceles

Criteria Based Access (CBA)

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Version: 4

Authorisation and document control

Name of policy:	Hydroceles
Job title of author:	Commissioning Manager- Elective Care
Name of sign off group:	Commissioning Policy Review Group

Equality and Engagement Impact Assessment	
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Commissioning Policy Review Group	10 September 2024
System Quality Committee	

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To be reviewed by (job title)	Commissioning Manager-Urology, Elective Care

Version control				
Version number	Date	Summary of changes	Author/Editor	Approved by
1	04.04.2016	Publication of policy		Integrated Governance and Quality Committee
2	21.06.2018	Review date changed to June 2021		ECCP Group

3	22.07.2021	Minor wording changes recommended by Urology consultant. Review date changed to September 2024 Policy type changed from CBA+PA to CBA from 01.10.2021 agreed by Executive Directors M Walkingshaw & Marion Andrews-Evans 20.09.2021		ECCP Group
4	10.09.2024	No changes to policy. Review date changed to September 2027. Policy moved to new template.	Urology Commissioning Manager – Elective Care. IFR Manager	ECCP Group

1.0 Background

A hydrocele is characterised by fluid accumulation within the scrotum, the sac surrounding the testicles.

It is commonly seen in newborns but also in older boys and adult men. Most paediatric hydroceles are congenital and in the majority of cases resolve within the first year of life.

Many occur in adult men where they are found secondary to minor trauma, infection, testicular torsion, epididymitis, varicocele operation or testicular tumour.

The main symptom is a painless, swollen scrotum on 1 or both sides, which feels like a water filled balloon. In most cases, hydroceles are painless and do not pose a serious threat, although they can cause discomfort or swelling.

Treatment depends on the age of the patient and the degree of discomfort caused by the hydrocele. Surgery will only be performed if the hydrocele is causing problems or there is evidence of underlying pathology.

2.0 Policy statement

Policy category	Policy details
CBA	The ICB will agree to fund surgical referral for hydroceles in patients aged between 2 and 17 years old. Children under 2 years of age should rarely need treatment unless there are significant concerns about a hernia being present as most infant hydroceles will resolve without intervention. In patients aged 18 and over referral should only be made if the patient meets the following criteria:

	<p>Hydrocele symptoms are causing significant discomfort or functional impairment that is interfering with normal work, educational responsibilities and/or normal domestic activities. Description of problems should be documented in referral letter.</p> <p>Where a Patient or GP has concern about scrotal swelling and is unclear if this is caused by a hydrocele, an ultrasound scan should be considered as a simple way to alleviate concerns and may obviate the need for a referral. This does not require repeating if hydrocele confirmed ultrasonically.</p>
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3.0 Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy

Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy.

Individual cases will be reviewed at the ICB's Individual Funding Request Panel upon receipt of a completed application form from the patient's GP, Consultant or Clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

4.0 References

- NICE (2023) CKS scrotal pain swelling: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/scrotal-pain-swelling/management/hydrocele/>
- The Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) joint publications *Asymptomatic scrotal swelling, commissioning guide* [RCS, 2013a]
- The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS) <https://www.baus.org.uk/userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Hydrocele.pdf>
- National Health Service (2023) Health A to Z: Testicle lumps and swellings [online] www.nhs.uk/conditions
- British Medical Journal (2023) Professional Article: Hydrocele 1104 [online] Hydrocele - Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment | [BMJ Best Practice](#)
- National Library of Medicine (2020) Aspiration and sclerotherapy of hydroceles and spermatoceles/epididymal cysts with 100% alcohol (31628703) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31628703/>