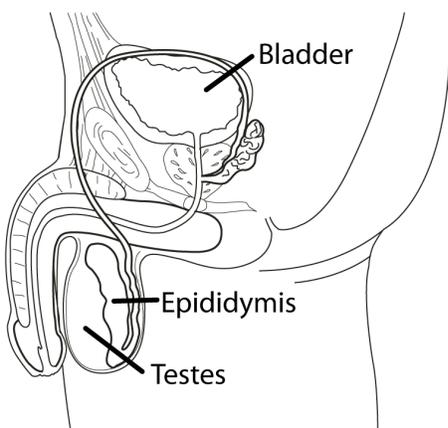


## Epididymitis

Epididymitis (sounds like ep-ee-did-ih-my-tis) is when the epididymis is inflamed and swollen. It can cause pain when urinating (peeing) or cloudy pus or blood in the semen or coming from the penis. The epididymis is the small coiled tube that sperm passes through. This tube is at the back of each testicle. The swelling can be in one or both testicles (testes).



Side View

### What causes this?

Epididymitis can be caused by:

- a urinary tract infection
- sexually transmitted infection
- an enlarged prostate gland
- surgery on the prostate
- a medical procedure involving the urinary tract

### When to get help

**See your family doctor** or go to a walk-in clinic if you notice any of the following:

- You do not improve after 3 days of the medication.
- You have pain in your testicles that does not get better with pain medicine.
- You notice sores on your scrotum.
- You notice pus leaking from your scrotum.

**Return to the Emergency Department** right away if you notice any of the following:

- Your scrotum turns purple or blue.
- You have a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)

### How is it treated?

Epididymitis is usually treated easily at home (See instructions on the next page). Depending on the cause, you might also be given antibiotics.

## Epididymitis - *continued*

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### How to care for yourself at home

- Rest.
- If you are to take an antibiotic, fill the prescription and take the medicine exactly as directed. Make sure you take the medicine until it is all gone – even if you are feeling better.
- If a sexually transmitted infection caused the epididymitis, your sex partner(s) may need to be treated with medicine.
- Cold reduces pain and swelling. Ice your scrotum for 15 minutes - every 1 to 2 hours (see how to 'ice' your scrotum). If you cannot keep this schedule, ice your scrotum at least four times a day for 15 minutes each time. More often is better.

**Do not** leave the ice in place for more than 15 minutes at a time because it can cause more pain and swelling.

- When lying down, place a folded or rolled up towel under your scrotum. This will support your scrotum and help ease the swelling and pain.
- Wear a jock strap or briefs. Either will help support your scrotum and ease the pain.
- If the inflammation turns into an infection, do not have sex until the infection is gone.
- If you have pain or discomfort, take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol or store brand), or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or store brand).

### How to 'ice' your scrotum

- You need:
  - A dry towel
  - Something to act as 'ice' (package of frozen peas, bag of crushed ice, bag of ice cubes, soft gel ice pack)
- Wrap the ice in the dry towel.
- Place the towel wrapped ice on your scrotum.

### Note

Never place an ice pack or plastic bag with ice directly on your bare skin. It can cause frostbite. The towel helps spread the cold while protecting your skin from frostbite.

### To learn more, it's good to ask

- Your family doctor
- Fraser Health Virtual Care  
1-800-314-0999 or live chat online at [fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare](https://fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare)  
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at [HealthLinkBC.ca](https://HealthLinkBC.ca)

Adapted from 'GA.500.E65 Epididymitis' (March 2012) with permission from Vancouver Coastal Health.