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FACTSHEET

VARICOCELE REPAIR

About the Procedure:

Varicocele repair is performed to improve male fertility. It can usually be done surgically on an outpatient basis using local anesthetic, but some cases may require sedation or deeper anesthesia. A small incision is made in the lower abdomen, on the side of the varicocele. The veins that produce the varicocele are identified and cut to eliminate the swelling in these vessels. The procedure usually takes about 60 to 90 minutes.

Preparing for the Procedure:

If you are to get sedation or general anesthesia for the procedure (check with your doctor), do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the procedure. You should take your usual medications as you normally would the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water only (avoid juice, milk, coffee, etc.). Starting 5 to 10 days prior to your procedure (ask your doctor for a specific time), it is important to stop taking medications that might increase your risk of bleeding. For a list of blood-thinning medications that should be avoided, ask your doctor.

After the Procedure:

There will be a dressing on the incision that can be removed on the second day after the procedure. After that, it is OK to shower (let soap and water run over the incision, then pat dry), but baths and soaking in a tub should be avoided for 2 weeks after the procedure. The incision should be kept clean and dry to allow it to heal, so it is important to shower once a day. The incision generally heals in five to seven days, but avoid any strenuous activity and exercise or heavy lifting for 4 to 6 weeks after the procedure. The stitches will dissolve and fall off on their own usually within the first week or two after the procedure. It is usually OK to resume your blood-thinning medication the day after your procedure, but check with your doctor to be sure. Take all the medications prescribed by your doctor (including any antibiotics and pain medications), and schedule an appointment to follow up with him within the first 2 weeks after the procedure (ask your doctor if you are unsure when to follow up). Make arrangements for someone else to drive you home after the procedure if you are to have sedation or general anesthesia.