Epididymo-Orchitis Patient Fact Sheet

What is Epididymo-Orchitis?

Epididymo-orchitis is a condition characterised by inflammation and swelling of the epididymis and/or the testis. The epididymis is the coiled tube at the back of each testicle where sperm mature. It can affect men of any age, but is most common in men aged 19-35 years.

What Causes Epididymo-Orchitis?

The most common causes of epididymo-orchitis are:

- **Infections:** This can be due to sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea or chlamydia, or non-sexually transmitted infections like urinary tract infections or prostatitis.
- **Backflow of urine:** This can occur when the pressure inside the bladder increases, causing urine to flow back into the epididymis, leading to inflammation. This can be due to heavy lifting or straining.
- **Trauma:** Injury to the groin area can sometimes lead to epididymo-orchitis.

What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can develop over several days. These may include:

- Swelling and tenderness in one or both testicles.
- Redness and warmth in the scrotum.
- Painful urination or an urgent need to urinate.
- Discharge from the penis.
- Fever and chills.
- Pain during intercourse or ejaculation.
- Presence of blood in the semen.

How is it Diagnosed?

Your doctor may use a combination of physical examination, urine tests, and sometimes ultrasound to diagnose epididymo-orchitis. Depending on your symptoms and sexual history, they may also test for sexually transmitted infections.

How is it Treated?

The treatment for epididymo-orchitis typically includes:

- **Antibiotics:** These are usually prescribed if the condition is caused by a bacterial infection. It's crucial to complete the full course, even if you start feeling better.
- **Pain relievers:** Over-the-counter pain relievers can help reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Rest:** Bed rest with the scrotum elevated can help reduce swelling and discomfort.
- **Ice packs:** Applying an ice pack to the area may help reduce swelling.

Can it be Prevented?

Epididymo-orchitis can be prevented by:

- Practising safe sex: Use condoms to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- Urinating when needed: Don't hold in urine for long periods of time.
- Taking care of your health: Regular check-ups and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can prevent urinary tract infections.

When Should I Seek Medical Help?

If you experience severe or persistent pain in the testicle, scrotum or lower abdomen, see your doctor as soon as possible. Prompt diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications, such as abscess formation or reduced fertility.

This information is intended for general informational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have any health concerns, please see your healthcare provider.

Last updated: May 2023

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