

Varicocele Embolization

You have been referred to RIA Endovascular for varicocele embolization.

- 1) Please call 720.493.3406 to schedule an initial consultation. At that time, we will discuss the procedure with you and answer any questions. The consultation will be held in our centrally located office at 8200 E Belleview, Suite 600, Greenwood Village, 80111.
- 2) If you require insurance pre-authorization, RIA Endovascular's in-house precertification specialist will assist you.
- 3) Your procedure will be performed by one of our physicians—a board-certified, fellow-trained interventional radiologist—who is experienced and skilled in varicocele embolization.

FAQ

The following information includes frequently asked questions.

More information and a list of our physicians can be found at RIAEndovascular.com.

What is a varicocele?

A varicocele is a dilated vein in the scrotum around a testicle. While usually occurring in the left testicle, varicoceles less often occur in both testicles. Healthy veins within the scrotum contain one-way valves that allow blood to flow from the testicles and scrotum back to the heart. When you have a varicocele, these valves do not function properly. This causes the blood to pool which enlarges the vein, sometimes causing pain and heaviness.

A varicocele can lead to testicular atrophy (shrinkage of the testicles) and possibly contribute to infertility. Some experts believe that the elevated temperature resulting from pooled blood in gonadal veins can decrease sperm count and motility, and decrease the number of functional sperm.

What are the symptoms of a varicocele?

Symptoms may include:

Pain

Men and boys who experience aching pain in their testicles—often when exercising, standing or sitting for a long time—may have a varicocele. The pain is due to pressure that builds up on the affected veins. Sometimes, but not always, the painful varicocele is somewhat prominent in size.

Fertility Problems

There is an association between varicoceles and infertility.

Testicular Atrophy

Shrinkage of the testicles is another symptom of varicoceles. Once treated, it is possible for the affected testicles to return to a normal size.

What is varicocele embolization?

Varicocele embolization is a proven, highly effective procedure with excellent outcomes for the treatment of varicocele. It is as effective as surgery with less risk, less pain and a significantly shorter recovery period.

Varicocele embolization is a minimally invasive procedure. Minimally invasive means it does not involve surgery. The procedure is performed by a highly experienced and skilled interventional radiologist using image-guided techniques in an outpatient angiography suite.

Typically mild IV sedation and local anesthesia are used. Your interventional radiologist will make a tiny nick in the skin at the right side of the groin or neck to insert the catheter. The





catheter is a tiny tube (2 mm in diameter) that is guided into the gonadal vein. This does not hurt.

The physician then injects contrast dye through the catheter to facilitate visualization of all the gonadal veins, including identification of the varicose vein (varicocele).

Finally, your interventional radiologist will place a medical-grade material (such as coils or particles, depending on what is medically appropriate for you) to embolize—or block the flow of—the troublesome vein. The catheter will be withdrawn and a small bandage will be applied.

Is the procedure painful?

The procedure is performed with local anesthesia and conscious sedation. It is not a painful procedure.

Will I have a scar?

During varicocele embolization, no incision is made in or near the testicles. Rather, a tiny nick is made in the leg or neck where the catheter is inserted into the vein. There are no stitches.

Does the procedure affect sexual function?

No. Sexual function is not affected.

Will the procedure improve my semen analysis?

Several studies have shown that varicocele repair can improve semen counts to a significant degree. However, there is no guarantee that any individual will experience a significant improvement after undergoing this procedure. It is known that pregnancy rates in infertile couples improve between 30 and 50 percent after varicocele repair.

What should I expect in terms of recovery?

After one-to-two hours of recovery time, you will be discharged and allowed to go home. Rest quietly at home that day.

For 72 hours afterwards, limit strenuous physical activity. Otherwise, resume normal activity the next day. You may experience common side effects such as low-grade fever, pelvic body aches and general fatigue lasting five-to-seven days.

Will insurance pay for varicocele embolization?

If you require insurance authorization, our dedicated in-house precertification specialist will assist you.

Generally, insurance companies will pay for varicocele embolization if they reimburse for varicocele surgery. Some insurance companies limit the coverage provided for infertility treatment. For more information, please review your insurance policy and contact your insurance provider.

Consults. Referrals. Scheduling. Appointments.
720.493.3406