

Patient information sheet · Interventional Radiology · Cochin Hospital AP-HP

A varicocele is an **abnormal dilatation of the veins of the spermatic cord**, most commonly on the left side. It results from impaired venous drainage and can cause scrotal pain or heaviness, and may affect male fertility by raising testicular temperature and impairing spermatogenesis.

1. What is it?

- Varicoceles are found in approximately 15% of all men and in 35–40% of men investigated for infertility.

2. Who is this treatment for?

- Men with a symptomatic varicocele (pain, discomfort, heaviness)
- Varicocele associated with impaired semen analysis
- Persistent or recurrent varicocele after previous surgery
- Patients who prefer a non-surgical approach
- Varicoceles are graded **1** (palpable only on Valsalva), **2** (palpable at rest) and **3** (visible to the eye). Palpable grades 2–3 with an abnormal semen analysis are the best indications; subclinical forms (seen only on Doppler ultrasound) remain debated.
- Beyond fertility, embolization is also considered for **chronic scrotal pain, adolescent varicocele with impaired testicular growth, recurrence after surgery**, and — as an emerging, case-by-case indication — **symptomatic low testosterone**.

3. How does the procedure work?

- **Outpatient procedure** — arrive in the morning, home the same day
- **Local anaesthesia** — femoral or jugular vein access (small skin puncture only)
- **Venography** — the internal spermatic vein is catheterised under fluoroscopic guidance
- **Embolization** — coils or cyanoacrylate glue are deposited to occlude the vein permanently
- **Discharge 2 hours later** — normal activity resumed next day
- Embolisation remains effective **even after failed or recurrent surgery**: it is a reference salvage option, and recent literature positions it as a first-line treatment. When performed for infertility, sperm parameters improve in 60 to 80% of patients in published series. As noted above, the benefit for a couple's fertility should be discussed on a case-by-case basis — the indication is not automatic.

4. Warning signs — when to contact us

⚠ **If you experience severe pain, fever, bleeding or any unusual symptom after the procedure, contact our team: ri.cch@aphp.fr · +33 1 58 41 46 12.**

Informed consent

I, the undersigned:

Full name:

Having read this information sheet and received all the explanations I wished for, I give my consent for varicocele embolization.

Place: Date:

Patient signature:

The medical data in your file may be used for statistical purposes, in compliance with medical confidentiality and applicable regulations (GDPR).

Information document — a proposal to be validated by the medical team before publication. It does not replace a medical consultation.