

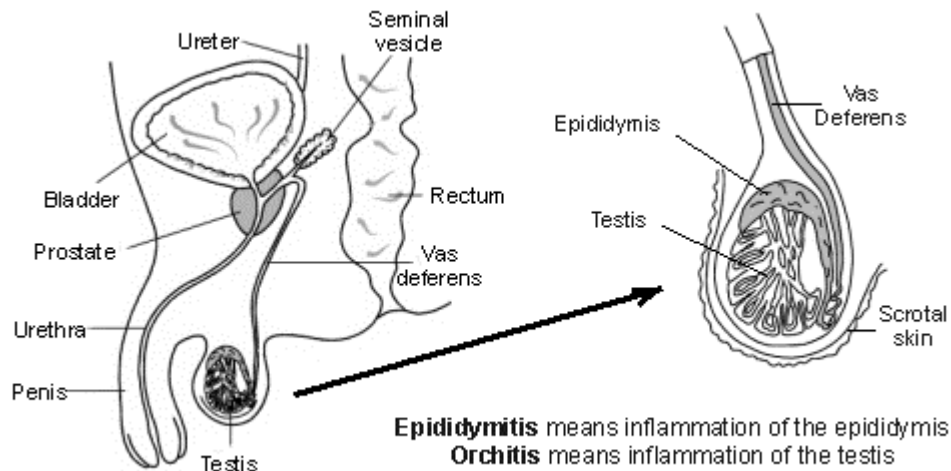
## Epididymo-orchitis

Epididymo-orchitis is inflammation of the testis and epididymis. It is usually due to infection. Antibiotics are usually prescribed. Full recovery is usual. Complications are uncommon.

### What is epididymo-orchitis?

- **Orchitis** means inflammation of a testis (testicle).
- **Epididymitis** means inflammation of the epididymis (the structure next to the testes that is involved in making sperm).

Typically, if a testis becomes inflamed then the nearby epididymis also becomes inflamed (and vice-versa). This is called epididymo-orchitis.



### What causes epididymo-orchitis?

Infection is the usual cause.

- **The mumps virus** used to be a common cause. Most people with mumps develop swelling of the parotid salivary glands. However, mumps in boys also causes epididymo-orchitis in about 1 in 5 cases. The virus gets to the testes via the bloodstream. This cause is now uncommon since the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) immunization is now routinely given to children.

- **Other virus infections** are uncommon causes of epididymo-orchitis.
- **Bacterial infection.**
  - Urine infections sometimes track back along the vas deferens to cause epididymo-orchitis.
  - Infection of the prostate or urethra can also track down the vas deferens to the testes. Sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea are common causes of urethral infection, which may also cause epididymo-orchitis.
  - Operations to the prostate or urethra may allow bacteria into the urethra, which may track down to the testes. Epididymo-orchitis used to be a common complication after prostatectomy (removal of the prostate). This is now rare due to better surgical techniques and antibiotics.
  - Infection from other parts of the body can, rarely, travel in the blood to the testes. For example, TB (tuberculosis) sometimes affects the testes.

### **What are the symptoms of epididymo-orchitis?**

Symptoms usually develop quickly - over a day or so. The affected epididymis and testis swell rapidly, and the scrotum becomes enlarged, tender, and red. It can be very painful.

There may be other symptoms if the epididymo-orchitis is a complication from another infection. For example: pain on passing urine if you have a urine infection; a discharge from the penis if you have a urethral infection; etc. As with any infection, you may have a fever and feel generally unwell.

### **Are any tests needed?**

Tests to look for infecting bacteria may be done. For example, a urine test may be taken if a urine infection appears to be the root cause. If you have a urethral discharge then a sample of the discharge may be taken.

### **What is the treatment for epididymo-orchitis?**

Antibiotics are usually given as soon as epididymo-orchitis is diagnosed. These normally work well, and full recovery is usual within 1-2 weeks. Antibiotics do not kill viruses and they are not needed if a viral cause is confirmed.

You may find that supporting underwear helps to ease the pain. Painkillers will also ease the pain.

### **Are there any complications from epididymo-orchitis?**

An abscess (ball of infection with pus) in the scrotum occasionally develops. This may need a small operation to drain the pus. Mumps epididymo-orchitis can sometimes cause reduced fertility in the affected testis.