
Can Ignoring Enlarged Veins Cause Infertility in Men?



Infertility is a sensitive yet significant issue affecting an estimated 15% of couples worldwide. While often thought of as a predominantly female concern, male infertility plays a role in approximately 40% to 50% of the cases. [In the USA alone, it is estimated that 10% to 15% of males trying to conceive are affected by infertility.](#)

Among the various causes contributing to male fertility, enlarged veins in the scrotum are often overlooked and, therefore, left untreated. If you do not seek treatment for your varicocele, the affected testicle might be completely damaged. Also, untreated enlarged veins cause overheating, which affects the mobility and quality of the sperm. Both of these are strong reasons for infertility in men.

What is varicocele & its symptoms?

Varicoceles are abnormal enlargements in the veins within the scrotum, similar to varicose veins that usually form in the legs. They happen when the valves inside the veins that regulate blood flow malfunction, resulting in a backflow of blood. This leads to the veins becoming engorged and swollen, forming a varicocele.

Varicocele is a condition mostly found on the left side of the scrotum, though it can also occur on the right or both sides.

While it sounds scary, this condition is not uncommon. As a matter of fact, [15% of all adult men have a varicocele](#). The condition often develops during puberty but remains unnoticed until a man experiences symptoms or faces difficulty with fertility.

While most men do not experience any noticeable symptoms, these signs indicate the presence of the condition:

- An aching, dull pain or heaviness in the scrotum, especially after physical exertion or standing for long periods.
- Twisted or enlarged veins that are palpable or visible.
- Shrinking of the affected testicle.
- Fertility issues

Is varicocele one of the primary causes of infertility in men?

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While there are other causes of infertility in men, varicoceles are considered one of the primary ones. Research suggests that [40% of men diagnosed with infertility are found to have varicoceles](#).

The relationship between infertility and varicocele stems from the way the condition affects the production of sperm and the testes. The testes need a cooler temperature than the rest of the body to produce sperm. Varicoceles causes the blood to pool in the veins around the testes, raising the temperature and hindering normal sperm production. This results in the following issues that directly impact fertility:

- Reduced sperm count
- Poor sperm motility
- Abnormal sperm morphology
- Testicular damage

Ignoring varicoceles for an extended period can aggravate these issues, making it much harder to reverse the damage and restore fertility.

While consuming a healthy diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and [nuts to potentially boost testosterone levels](#), and taking supplements can support overall health, they may not be sufficient to address the underlying causes of infertility related to varicocele. Seeking timely medical attention is crucial for effective treatment and improving fertility prospects.

What are the available treatment options for varicoceles?

As you can see, ignoring enlarged veins in your scrotum and not seeking treatment will not make varicoceles disappear. Instead, it is going to exacerbate the condition, and you might never be able to restore your fertility. Getting treatment is necessary to prevent complications.

Depending on the severity of the varicocele and its impact on fertility, the treatment options available are:

- Lifestyle adjustments

Men with mild varicoceles with no symptoms or fertility problems can reverse the damage through lifestyle adjustments. Usually, doctors recommend a wait-and-watch approach if the condition is caught at an early stage.

The simple lifestyle changes that can improve your health are wearing supportive underwear, avoiding standing for a long time or managing physical exertion.

However, if you face fertility issues, more active treatments might be necessary.

- Varicocelectomy

A varicocelectomy is a surgical treatment for the condition. During this procedure, a surgeon ties off the impacted veins to redirect blood flow to healthier veins. Generally, this procedure is performed on an outpatient basis.

- Embolisation

Embolisation is surgery that cuts off the blood supply temporarily. A healthcare practitioner carries out this procedure with local anesthesia. During this procedure, a doctor inserts a needle into a vein through the groin or the neck. The needle helps the doctor access the veins in the scrotum and then block off the varicocele.

After the procedure, you might experience some tenderness and pain. However, the recovery time is short, and it is possible to return to usual activities almost immediately.

- ART (assisted reproductive technology)

In some rare cases, men with varicoceles continue to face challenges with fertility even after receiving treatment. Assisted reproductive technologies, such as IUI (intrauterine insemination) or IVF (in vitro fertilisation), might be recommended to help couples conceive.

ART methods are known to bypass some of the issues caused by varicoceles, such as abnormal morphology or poor sperm motility.

Conclusion: Do not ignore varicocele treatment!

Varicoceles are a common condition affecting men worldwide, especially during their reproductive years. While most men are asymptomatic, and the symptoms might not even manifest until it is too late, you must not ignore treatment once you have been diagnosed with this condition.

If varicoceles is left untreated, it leads to serious complications, including infertility. Letting the condition worsen will lead to impairing sperm production, reducing the quality of sperm, and might even result in testicular damage over time.

It is crucial for men to understand the symptoms and risks of varicoceles, especially if they are planning to conceive in the future. Some of the common symptoms are dull pain in the scrotum, visibly enlarged veins on the left or right side of the scrotum, and shrinking of the affected testicle.

The good news is that treatment options are readily available that can help treat the condition and improve sperm health. The popular treatment options are lifestyle changes, embolisation, or varicocelectomy. Your treatment will depend on the condition's severity.

Remember, if you address varicoceles early, you can preserve your reproductive health and enhance your chances of becoming a father.

Have you been diagnosed with varicoceles? Do not waste another minute to consult your doctor and get the condition treated! If you've never been diagnosed, perform self-checks to prevent the conditions from worsening.

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