Patient Information about Varicocele Embolization
Barnes-Jewish Hospital Interventional Radiology

What is a Varicocele?
- A varicocele is an enlarged blood vessel in the scrotum.
- It can cause pain, swelling and infertility.

What is Varicocele Embolization?
- This procedure blocks the blood flow to the enlarged vessel.
- It safely relieves pain and swelling and may improve sperm quality.

How is it done?
- The doctor (Radiologist) locates a vein in your neck or groin with ultrasound, numbs the skin, and inserts a small tube (catheter).
- Using a live X-ray (fluoroscopy), the tube is guided to the enlarged blood vessel to block the blood supply.
- Afterwards, the tube is removed and pressure is held at the site.

Before your procedure:
- It is important that you do not eat or drink anything 6 hours before your procedure. However, you may take your medicines with a sip of water.

When you arrive:
- A nurse will greet you, ask you to change into a gown, obtain your medical history, and place an IV in your hand or arm.
- The doctor will then meet with you to review your medical history, explain the procedure, answer your questions, and have you sign the consent form.

During your procedure:
- After being safely positioned on the procedure table, a nurse will get your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen level.
- You will be given medicine through your IV to help you relax and to relieve any pain.
- The procedure will take about 1 hour.

After your procedure:
- You will be taken to the holding area to rest for about 1 hour.
- A nurse will review the following with you and your loved-ones:
  ♦ discharge instructions
  ♦ activity restrictions
  ♦ follow up appointment

If you have any of the following:
- Swelling or drainage at the insertion site.
- Fever greater than 101.5° for more than 24 hours.
- Severe pain at the insertion site that cannot be relieved.

Please call the Interventional Radiology Department at 314-362-2353, Monday-Friday from 7:30am - 4:30pm.
All other times call 314-362-1242 and ask to have the Interventional Radiologist paged.