

What's Up in Urology Journal, Spring 2012?

Urology for People is a section in the *Urology Journal* for providing people with a summary of what is published in this journal and describing urological entities in a simple language.

Important Note. The findings in medical papers are usually not directly applicable in clinical practice and patients should consult their physicians before any utilization of the results of medical studies.

KIDNEY STONE IN CHILDREN

There is a wide mistaken belief that only adults develop urinary stones. On the contrary, kidney stones can also occur in children. Kidney stones develop when a collection of minerals or other materials form a small "stone." The stone can cause severe pain, obstruction in the urine flow, and long-term kidney complications if it is not diagnosed and treated promptly. The incident of a kidney stone in a child is a relatively rare event. In countries where plants are the main source of protein in the diet, for example the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, the prevalence of the kidney stone is higher in children and rises. In China recently, some children who used milk contaminated with melamine (a toxic material illegally added to watered-down milk to increase the protein count) developed kidney stones. The incidence of the kidney stone in United States is also rising. The increase in the United States is attributed to some factors, including a food additive that is both legal and ubiquitous: salt. The initial sign in an infant may be a crying and devastated baby, and the presentation may be mistaken for colic. Limiting salt in the diet and drinking plenty of water are the best ways to prevent the most common types of the kidney stones or slow their growth.

See page 465 for full-text article.

WHAT IS VARICOCELE?

A varicocele (VAR-ih-koe-seel) is dilation of the scrotal vein, the loose bag of the skin that holds the testicles. They are rather common, affecting 15% of men overall and 40% of men with known infertility. Varicocele occurs most often in the left testis. Varicocele usually becomes obvious during adolescence and is rarely reported to arise in older men. The sudden appearance of a varicocele in an older man may be caused by a kidney tumor, which can block blood flow to a vein. The diagnosis of a varicocele is generally made on physical examination of the scrotum (clinical) or by ultrasonography (subclinical). The severity of the varicocele is graded I through III. Having a varicocele is thought to increase the chance of being infertile, but most men with a varicocele are not infertile. Most men who have a varicocele have no symptoms. Others may have the following signs and symptoms: Pain in the testis, feeling of heaviness in one or both testes, infertility, small testicle(s), and visible or palpable enlarged vein. Treatment is by surgery.

See page 505 for full-text article.