

Title: Cryptorchidism (Undescended Testis)

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Abstract: Cryptorchidism, or undescended testis can be a scary diagnosis for parent especially at first. Fortunately greater than half of boys with undescended testis at birth will have their testis descend on their own. For the remainder surgical correction is necessary. This brochure provides information on cryptorchidism, the different types and touches on treatment options.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

Cryptorchidism Undescended Testis

NATURAL HISTORY

In over half of boys with cryptorchidism, their testis will descend spontaneously during the first several months of life. Often, if this has not occurred by the time your baby is six to twelve months old, his doctor may refer him to urology.

TREATMENT

While you may have read about hormone therapy for this condition, it has not been shown to be effective. Currently the best recommendation is surgical.

If the testis have not descended on their own within the first year of your son's life, your doctor may recommend a visit to a urologist – who is a surgeon. Most commonly the procedure performed is called an orchipexy. This means the testicle is retrieved, placed and fixed into the scrotum. Your son typically can be ready to go home the same day of the procedure, although in some circumstances the surgeon may recommend a longer stay in the hospital.

Credits

This brochure was designed and created by Ali Mokhtarzadeh, University of Minnesota Medical Student. This was created to fulfill requirements of Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School.



CRYPTORCHIDISM

Undescended testis, or cryptorchidism, is one of the most common congenital abnormalities! It occurs in 2 to 5% of boys. Unfortunately it is a predisposing factor for decreased fertility and testicular cancer. Among men who have had undescended testis, the risk of testicular cancer is two to eight folds higher than others.

WHAT IS IT?

Normally, a boy's testicles descend into the scrotum at the end of pregnancy. Cryptorchidism is a condition, where either one or both of the testis have not passed down into the scrotal sac. Thirty percent of cases involve both testis. This condition is more common in boys born prior to their due date. This is due to the normal development of the testis. It takes up to month seven of fetal development for the testis to descend from the abdomen, where they originate, to the scrotal sac.

WHY ARE MY SON'S TESTIS UNDESCENDED?

The reason some boys' testis do not descend can be due to a variety of factors, and often the cause is not completely understood. The most common cause is premature birth. Other possibilities include hormonal disorders, spina bifida, retractile testes (a reflex that causes a testicle to move back and forth from the scrotum to the groin), or testicular absence.

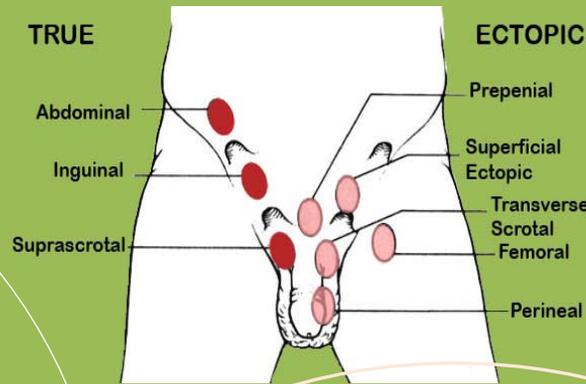


Figure 1. Different types of undescended testis

CATEGORIES

A boy with undescended testicles may have:

- ✧ True undescended testis- the testis comes only part of the way down the inguinal canal.
- ✧ Ectopic testis-the testis moves down the inguinal canal but lodges somewhere outside of the scrotum (usually under the skin in the groin).
- ✧ Retractable testis-this condition is sometimes mistaken for undescended testicles. For example, in response to a cold hand, a muscle in the canal contracts and pulls the testicle up. This situation is temporary. The testicle returns to the scrotum when it is warm and the muscle relaxes. Your surgeon will know by careful examination whether the testicles have descended.
- ✧ Absent testicle(s)- in this condition one or both testicles have not developed.