

# A Parents Guide to

## UNDESCENDED TESTICLES

### What is an Undescended Testicle?

An **undescended testicle**, also called a “cryptorchid testis,” is a common event in which one or both of the testes, the male reproductive glands, do not complete normal descent from the abdomen into the scrotum by birth.

The function of the testicle is to produce hormones and sperm. If the testicle is not in the “correct place,” it may not grow, develop or function correctly. Additionally, an undescended testicle may be associated with an increased risk of testicular cancer if not corrected prior to puberty.

Approximately three out of every 100 full term males are born with a testicle not felt or seen in the scrotal sac, but premature boys have rates closer to 1 out of 3. By the age of 6 months, most of these testicles complete their descent without any interventions. All boys are examined after birth and monitored by their primary care physician.

### How is an Undescended Testicle Diagnosed?

The obvious sign of an undescended testicle is that one or both testicles are not located in the scrotum. Other abnormalities of the male genitals

or urinary tract also may be noted, such as a hernia, hydrocele, or abnormal opening at the end of the penis (called hypospadias).

The diagnosis of an undescended testicle is made by a physical examination. Boys who have testicles that have not fully descended into the scrotal sac after 4-6 months of age may benefit from evaluation by a pediatric urologist.

### Treatment for Undescended Testicles

If the testicle does not descend on its own by 4-6 months of age (premature infants are given more time after birth), treatment is often needed. If left unattended, the undescended testicle will not grow and develop correctly.

- **Surgery** - The surgical correction of an undescended testicle is called an orchidopexy. This procedure is done under a general anesthetic, typically in an ambulatory setting by Dr. Robert Mevorach. A small incision is made in the inguinal area. The testicle is found, mobilized and placed into a position within the scrotum. A laparoscopic approach is often used, to assist with orchidopexy procedure, when the testicle is not felt prior to surgery. Laparoscopy is also done as a “same day” surgery.

**To learn more about undescended testicles, visit [forkids.chesapeakeurology.com](http://forkids.chesapeakeurology.com) or contact Chesapeake Urology For Kids at 443-738-8180.**

