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Hypospadias and your child

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Information
for parents

This leaflet provides you with information about hypospadias and its effects on your child

What is a hypospadias?

Hypospadias is a problem that young boys are born with where the opening of their urethra, the urinary tract, is lower than it should be.

How common is hypospadias?

It is not an unusual condition and the extent and effect of hypospadias varies from male to male. While the majority of people with hypospadias don't require surgery, St George's Hospital sees significant numbers of children with the condition and operates on them on a weekly basis. The majority of hypospadias operations are on children aged between nine and 18 months, and are quite minor procedures.

What are the effects of hypospadias?

There are a number of difficulties with hypospadias. There can be some tightening of the skin of the penis which gives a bent appearance, meaning that passing urine in a straight fashion can be extremely challenging and the child can pass urine on to the shoes or behind him. This becomes an issue when the child grows and wants to go to the toilet in a standing position. Hypospadias can also appear cosmetically unpleasing and might make it difficult for sexual intercourse in later life.

How do you get hypospadias?

Hypospadias is a condition you're born with and most occurrences are spontaneous. However, the condition can occasionally occur in families. There is a small risk your son may pass this on to his children.

What happens if my son has suspected hypospadias?

If there is a concern that your child has hypospadias he will be seen by one of our Paediatric Urology Surgeons who are experts in this field. The clinician will advise you whether your child needs further investigations or an operation.

There are a number of different operations that we perform for varying types of hypospadias, all aiming to have the same result and the clinician will talk you through all stages of the procedure and after care.

As a team we give lots of support and information to all parents of patients with hypospadias but the important thing to remember is that the vast majority of children do really well in adult life. We see lots of males who previously had surgery who come back to the hospital with their own children at later life.