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Your child's undescended testes

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Information
for parents

This leaflet provides information for parents whose child has undescended testes and will require an orchidopexy.

What are undescended testes?

Undescended testes are a common childhood condition where a boy is born without both testicles in his scrotum.

3% of all boys born at full term will have undescended testes. The majority of testicles descend by three months and by three to six months only 1% of boys will still have the testicle in the wrong place.

What happens if my child has undescended testes?

If your child is diagnosed as having testicle that is not quite down at around three to six months of age your child may have to undergo an operation to bring the testicle down into the scrotum - known as an orchidopexy.

What does the operation involve?

Orchidopexies are straightforward and uncomplicated procedures. It involves a small incision made into the groin above the testicle and a separate cut made in the scrotum to ensure the testicle is placed in a nice comfortable position. This is done under general anaesthetic.

Occasionally the testes cannot be felt in order to perform the incision so a camera is inserted in the bellybutton to look internally to determine whether the testicle is in the abdomen. If the testicle is in the abdomen it may be brought down in a single operation but in the majority of cases there is restricted movement and this is not possible. Two operations are then required - one straight away at the time of the initial keyhole procedure and the second six months later, at which the testicle is actually brought down into the scrotum itself.

What happens after the procedure?

Your child will need some regular pain relief in the days following the operation but should recover quickly from the procedure. Sometimes there can be some swelling and bruising around the scrotum and around the incision in the groin but overall the risks of infection are remarkably low.

If you have any concerns do not hesitate to contact the paediatric urology department at St George's Hospital (contact details overleaf).

What if I have any more questions?

Further information about the procedure, complications and long term implications of the surgery will be explained to you by your surgeon both in clinic and at the time of surgery.