

Fact Sheet

Hypospadias



What is it?

Hypospadias is an abnormality of the penis which has three features:

- The opening is not in the correct place - it is usually further back from the tip of the penis on the underside.
- There is often bending or curvature of the penis ("chordee") which is more pronounced during erection.
- The foreskin is usually (but not always) missing on the underside, giving a hooded or incomplete appearance. The foreskin can sometimes be intact.

The condition is usually identified at birth but sometimes it can be missed for several years.

How common is it?

Hypospadias is fairly common. It occurs in approximately 1 in 300 boys. The incidence is increasing.

What causes hypospadias?

The cause is unknown. It is usually an isolated abnormality. It is not strictly an inherited trait, like eye or hair colour, but it tends to occur more frequently in families where there is a history of hypospadias. The risk of having another child with hypospadias is about 1 in 30 or 14% of male siblings (so you should not let it affect your family planning).

Are there any associated problems with hypospadias?

Most boys with hypospadias have no other problems. However if the hypospadias is severe, there may be a need for further investigations, such as ultrasounds or blood tests to rule out other problems. Your doctor will tell you if further investigations are recommended.

Will my son need an operation?

Most boys with hypospadias will usually benefit from an operation. The operation aims to do three things:

- Straighten the penis, so that sexual intercourse can physically occur.
- Move the urethral opening to the end of the penis so that the child can stand and pass urine.
- Improve the appearance of the penis. The child will usually look circumcised after the repair.

If the boy's hypospadias is mild, and he has a good stream of urine, and a straight penis on erection, an operation may not be necessary.

If an operation is recommended, then it is generally best to occur before the child is 2 years old. Your child does not usually need to stay in hospital overnight after surgery.

Sometimes more than one operation is required to complete the repair. The need for a second operation may not arise for many years.

Can my son be circumcised before the operation?

It is important that the child NOT be circumcised prior to having the corrective surgery. The foreskin is needed for the repair to, result in the appearance of a circumcised penis.

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Remember

- Hypospadias can be repaired.
- If you are worried, talk to your child's doctor.
- It is important not to circumcise your child if hypospadias is noted at birth.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional
to make sure this information is right for your child.

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