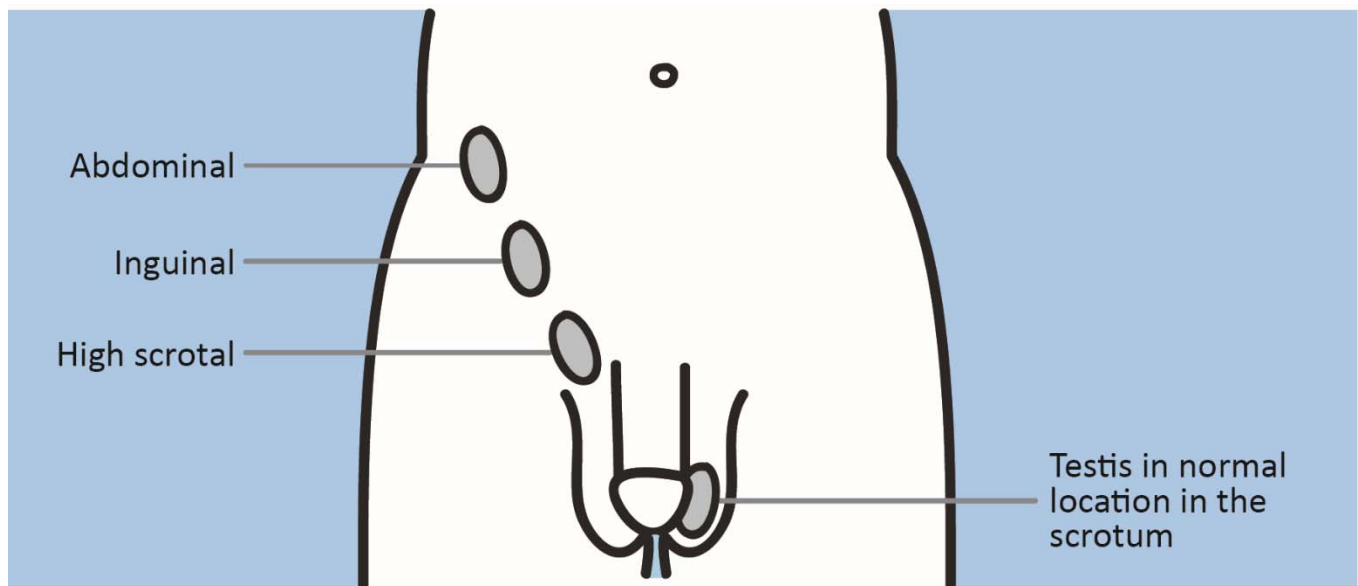


## Undescended Testicle

### Family Education Handout

#### What is an Undescended Testicle?

- The testicles develop near the kidneys during fetal development. The testicle is supposed to make its way down through the abdominal cavity into the scrotum before the child is born. When the testicle does not descend into the scrotum, it is called an undescended testicle. This can happen on one or both testicles.
- At birth, 1-2 percent of boys will have one testicle that is not in the scrotum.
- After birth, a total of 7% of boys will see spontaneous decent within the first year of life.



#### Signs and Symptoms

- Boys typically do not have any symptoms associated with an undescended testicle.
- An undescended testicle is noticed during the physical exam after birth or by your son's primary care doctor.
- Some undescended testicles are palpable (can feel the testicle but it is not in the right place) and others are non-palpable (unable to feel the testicle at all).

## Risks

- If the testicle is not down in the scrotum, there is a risk that the testicle may not develop properly. It is important for the testicle to be able to develop so that it can properly make hormones and sperm.
- Boys with an undescended testicle are at a slightly increased risk for testicular cancer later in life (although this is rare) so it is important for the testicle to be in the scrotum so that your son can perform testicular self-exam when he is older.

## Treatment

- If the testicle is not felt in the scrotum by 12 months of age, the surgeon will recommend surgery.
- The surgeon may also recommend surgery before 6 months of age if they are unable to feel the testicle.
- The surgical procedure to bring the testicle down into the scrotum is called an orchidopexy.
- An orchidopexy is performed in the operating room under anesthesia and child is usually able to go home the same day.
- Generally, one small incision is made in the groin and one small incision is made in the scrotum.
- Once the testicle is brought down into the scrotum it is attached with internal stitches to keep it in place.
- Occasionally, the orchidopexy needs to be completed in two stages.
- If the testicle appears abnormal during surgery, the surgeon may perform a biopsy to check the tissue or remove the testicle to prevent the development of cancer

## Phone Number

Department of Urology – 508-334-8765

## Find this handout and more at:

<https://www.umassmed.edu/urology/patient-education/pediatric-patient-education/>