

Single undescended testicles in the newborn

Introduction

This leaflet is for parents of babies who have a single undescended testicle detected at the newborn examination. It explains what has been found and what will happen next.

What is the condition?

When performing the newborn check one of the baby's testes has been found not to have descended into the scrotum.

What causes it?

In up to 5% of newborns, one testicle will not have descended from the abdomen into the scrotum in the usual way.

A single undescended testicle is most commonly a variation of development, and is known as a "simple undescended testicle". A definite cause has not been identified for this common condition.

Does anything increase the risk?

Associations include low birth weight, prematurity, maternal diabetes mellitus, smoking, alcohol consumption during pregnancy and family history of an undescended testicle.

What are the symptoms?

There are no symptoms in the short term.

Are there any tests or examinations needed to confirm the diagnosis?

In the case of a single undescended testicle, the initial step is to re-examine the baby in 6 to 8 weeks. Usually the testicle will descend by itself.

What treatments are available?

Surgical correction at approximately 1-2 years of age if it remains undescended

What are the side effects of the treatments?

A paediatric surgeon will discuss these risks with you if and when surgery becomes a consideration.

What are the risks of not having the treatment?

The risks of not correcting an undescended testicle include an increased risk of testicular cancer, association with sub-fertility and cosmetic issues.

What are the next steps?

All infants are reviewed at 6-8 weeks by the GP. Your GP will contact you to arrange an appointment. This is an opportunity for your GP to check if the testicle has descended spontaneously or if referral for a surgical review is indicated.

If you have any more questions

If you have concerns about your baby's health, please contact your GP.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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