

**Office for Genetics
and
Children with Special Health Care Needs**

**Hypospadias
Fact Sheet**

What Is Hypospadias?

- It is a condition in which the urinary opening (meatus) does not form as usual while a baby is growing before birth
- It is the most common birth defects in boys, it rarely occurs in girls

Signs and Symptoms

- Urinary opening below the tip on the bottom side of the penis
- Abnormal appearance of the glans penis (the tip)
- Incomplete foreskin in which the foreskin extends only around the top of the penis
- Curvature of the penis during an erection called chordee
- Abnormal position of the scrotum in relation to the penis
- Inability to urinate standing

***Doctors sometimes refer to Hypospadias by the area where the urinary opening is located:**

1. Glanular- The opening, while displaced, is still on the end of the penis
2. Coronal- The opening is at the groove where the glans (tip) joins the shaft
3. Penile- The opening is along the shaft of the penis
4. Scrotal- The opening is on the scrotum
5. Perineal- The opening is on the perineum (the area between the scrotum and the anus)

What is the cause?

- The cause of Hypospadias is unknown. The urinary tube and urinary opening does not develop in the usual way.
- Some doctors think that many factors, some genetic and some environmental, may act together to cause Hypospadias
- Most doctors think that the cause is not the same in every case. In some cases, Hypospadias is part of a syndrome (a group of birth defects that occur together). Some of these syndromes are genetic (Inherited)
- In some families the father and son both have Hypospadias

Can my child be circumcised?

- It is recommended that a child with Hypospadias **not** be circumcised at birth. The foreskin is often used to repair the urinary tube.

Is there any treatment?

- If the Hypospadias is serious enough, an operation to repair it may be recommended. A special doctor called an urologist (or pediatric urologist) assists in deciding if an operation is needed. **Studies have shown that the psychological impact of an operation on the penis is **less** for the child when the surgery is done before two years of age. (between six months and eighteen months)
- The type of repair will vary with the site of the urinary opening and the extent of the problem. The repair is usually done in one stage, but some children with very severe Hypospadias may require another operation at a later time. Many doctors will perform “same day surgery” in which the child does not have to spend the night in the hospital. Again, this may vary pending the site of the urinary opening and the extent of the problem.
- In some cases, treatment with testosterone (a male hormone) may be suggested before the repair to temporarily enlarge the penis to make it easier to do the repair

Support Groups/Resources

- Hypospadias and Epispadias Support Group
<http://heainfo.org/OtherSupportSources.html>
1-866-300-2222
- Kennedy Krieger Institute
<http://www.kennedykrieger.org>
443-923-9200
- March of Dimes
www.marchofdimes.com
1-410-546-2241
- Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs
<http://fha.maryland.gov/genetics/bdris.cfm>
1-800-638-8864
- The Parents’ Place Of Maryland
www.ppm.org
410- 768-9100

