

Hypospadias

What Parents Should Know



What is Hypospadias?

Hypospadias is a condition present from birth. It is when the opening of the urethra (“meatus” - the hole that urine comes out of) is on the underside of the penis rather than the tip of the penis (“distal” position). In some cases, it can be found on the middle of the penile shaft, the base of the penis, or even within the scrotum (called “proximal” positions). Where the opening of the urethra is will decide how your child’s care team will fix it.

How Common is Hypospadias?

While it is not easy to have an exact number, it is thought that hypospadias occurs in about 1 in 200 boys. If a brother or a father has hypospadias, the risk in a second boy increases to 21 out of 100.

What are Common Signs or Symptoms?

The main sign a boy has hypospadias is the opening of his urethra is on the underside of his penis, rather than the tip. Other signs you might see are:

- a downward urine spray (in boys with more severe hypospadias, this may mean he has to sit down to pass urine)
- a downward curve of the penis, which is called “chordee”
- an odd look to the tip of the penis

How is Hypospadias Diagnosed?

Hypospadias is most often noticed at birth. Not only is the meatus in the wrong place, but the foreskin is often not completely formed on its underside. This results in a “dorsal hood” of foreskin that leaves the tip of the penis exposed.

There is often an impression near the tip of the penis that makes it look like there are two separate openings, but the urine will exit from the bottom opening.

How is Hypospadias Treated?

Treatment will depend on the child’s symptoms, age and general health. It will also depend on the severity of the condition. Medicine will not fix hypospadias, and a child will not outgrow it. Some boys do not undergo any treatment because their condition is so mild. For others, surgery is an option. Surgery is often done when the child is between the ages of 6-12 months. The goal of any type of hypospadias surgery is to make a typical, straight penis with a urinary channel that ends at or near the tip. The operation mostly involves four steps:

- straightening the shaft of the penis
- moving or making the urinary channel
- positioning the meatus in the head of the penis
- circumcising or reconstructing the foreskin

If your son has hypospadias, talk to a pediatric urologist to decide the best plan.

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Questions to Ask Your Doctor:

- Is surgery required?
- If so, which type of surgery is best for my son?
- Are you skilled with this type of surgery? If not, can you suggest someone?
- Is anesthesia used?
- How do I care for my son after surgery?
- How long will healing take?
- What is the cost of care (do you take insurance)?

About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

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