



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Testicular torsion in children

Information for parents, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

**Department of Urology**

The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE  
Tel: 01723342132



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This leaflet is for parents or carers of children who have been advised to have an operation for testicular torsion. It explains what this condition is, what to expect if your child requires a procedure and follow-up care.

## **What is testicular torsion?**

Torsion of the testes occurs if the testicle twists and the blood supply is cut off.

Some people are born with testicles that are move freer within the scrotum and predisposed to twisting. In these cases, they can twist spontaneously, which kinks and cuts off the blood supply to the testicle.

Testicular torsion is an emergency as without blood supply the testicle can die.

## **What are the symptoms of torsion?**

- Sudden pain in one testicle. Though sometimes this pain can occur in the abdomen
- A swollen or hard testicle which may appear higher or lie to the side
- Often there can be associated nausea and vomiting

## **How is testicular torsion diagnosed?**

Unfortunately, there is no reliable test for testicular torsion. If suspected the only way to know for sure is an operation to look inside the scrotum and see if the testicle is twisted.

This is a time critical procedure with the best chance of saving the testicle if it is performed soon after the onset of pain.

## **What does the operation involve?**

The procedure requires a general anaesthetic. Once your child is asleep, a small cut is made in the scrotum and the testicle examined. If the testicle is found to be twisted it will be untwisted and fixed in place with stitches so it cannot happen again. The other testicle is also fixed with stitches to prevent a torsion occurring on the other side.

Generally, if a different cause of pain is found the testicles would not need to be fixed in place with stitches.

It is important to note that if the blood flow has been cut off for too long it may not be possible to save the testicle and it may need to be removed at the time of the operation.

## **What are the benefits of the operation?**

To relieve obstruction of blood flow to the testis and save the testicle if possible.

## **What are the risks of the operation?**

There is a risk that the testicle will need to be removed if it is too damaged. This risk varies depending on how long the blood supply to the testicle has been cut off for. Other risks of the operation include:

### **Common (greater than one in 10)**

- Swelling and bruising of the scrotum for a few days after the procedure

### **Occasional (between one in 10 and one in 50)**

- Infection of the surgical site or testis which may require antibiotics or surgical drainage
- Blood collection around the testes (haematoma) which may resolve over time or may require further surgical intervention
- Being able to feel the stitches through the skin if the testes are fixed in place

Rare (less than one in 50)

- Testicular shrinkage over time following the procedure
- Loss of testicular function including infertility, though if the other testicle is healthy this risk is minimal
- Complications associated with general anaesthetic

## **Are there any alternatives to the operation?**

There are no alternative treatments for torsion.

## **What happens before the operation?**

As this is an unplanned procedure, you may feel like you are not fully prepared. A nurse will ask medical questions and check your child's height and weight. If possible, the hospital play team will discuss the anaesthetic to help you and your child understand it more. However, as this is an emergency procedure it is not always possible for the play team to see your child before the operation. The doctor will explain the operation in more detail, discuss any worries you may have and ask you to sign a consent form. An anaesthetist will also see you to explain your child's anaesthetic in more detail.

It is important to let us know about any medical problems or allergies your child may have. [\[OBJ\]](#)

## **What happens after the operation?**

After the operation, your child will recover on Ward 17 until they are ready to go home, which is usually on the same or next day. Your child will likely suffer some post operative discomfort. Please give painkillers according to the instructions on the packet to help ease pain. Your child will benefit from rest for a few days. They should be well enough to go back to school or nursery after one week, however all sports should be avoided for two weeks.

Following the operation, the wound should be kept clean and dry for two to three days. The stitches are usually dissolvable and do not require removal. We recommend quick washes for the first week after the operation. Underpants will be more supportive and comfortable than boxers.

Your child may have an outpatient appointment several weeks after the surgery to assess the testicle. If he does, a letter will be posted to you. Your nurse will give you discharge advice before you go home.



## **What issues should I look out for?**

- Your child is not drinking well at home.
- Your child is in a lot of pain and painkillers do not seem to help.
- The operation site seems inflamed, red, or the skin seems hotter than the surrounding skin.
- There is any oozing from the operation site.

If you have these or other concerns after the operation, please contact Urology Department:

Tel: 01723342132

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Miss. Ivana Rakin, Department of Urology,  
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
telephone 01723342132.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends, and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.PatientExperienceTeam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.PatientExperienceTeam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.



# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

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