

Information for Parents About the Fowler-Stephens Procedure for Undescended Testis

Cryptorchidism is the medical name used to describe a testicle that didn't descend all the way into the scrotum (the sac beneath the penis). Sometimes the testicle is found in the abdominal cavity. This may require a special surgery.

When the testicle is found in the abdominal cavity, the artery that supplies blood to the testicle may be so short that it wouldn't allow the testis to come down to the scrotum.

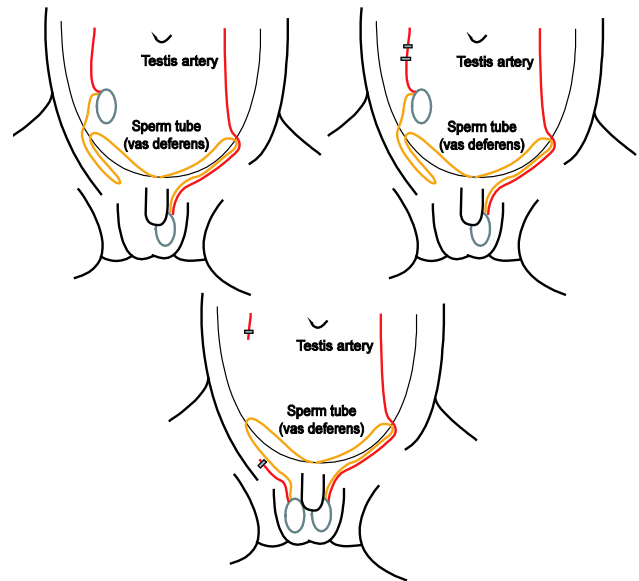
There are actually two arteries that give blood to the testicle, the main testicular artery and a smaller artery that runs along the sperm tube (vas). When the main artery is too short it is possible to tie off that artery and use the second artery, the vas artery. Once the main artery is tied and cut, the vas (sperm tube) is unfolded so that the testicle can be brought down into the scrotum.

The advantage of doing this special surgery is that it avoids 1) leaving the testicle in the abdominal cavity where it has a higher chance of developing cancer or 2) removing the testicle.

This special surgery doesn't take much longer to perform than the regular procedure. When it is necessary, the testicle most often survives the procedure and stays healthy in the scrotum. There is a much higher chance that the testicle will not survive than if the regular surgery is used. The chance that the testicle will not survive is between 25 to 35%. If the testicle doesn't survive, it will shrink and disappear over several weeks. If that happens, no other surgeries would be needed.

For more information on this topic you are welcome to visit Dr. Hatch's web site: Genitourinary Development [www.meddean.luc.edu/lumen/meded/urology/guhome.htm]

For more information about Dr. Hatch please visit our web site [www.luhs.org/urology]



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