

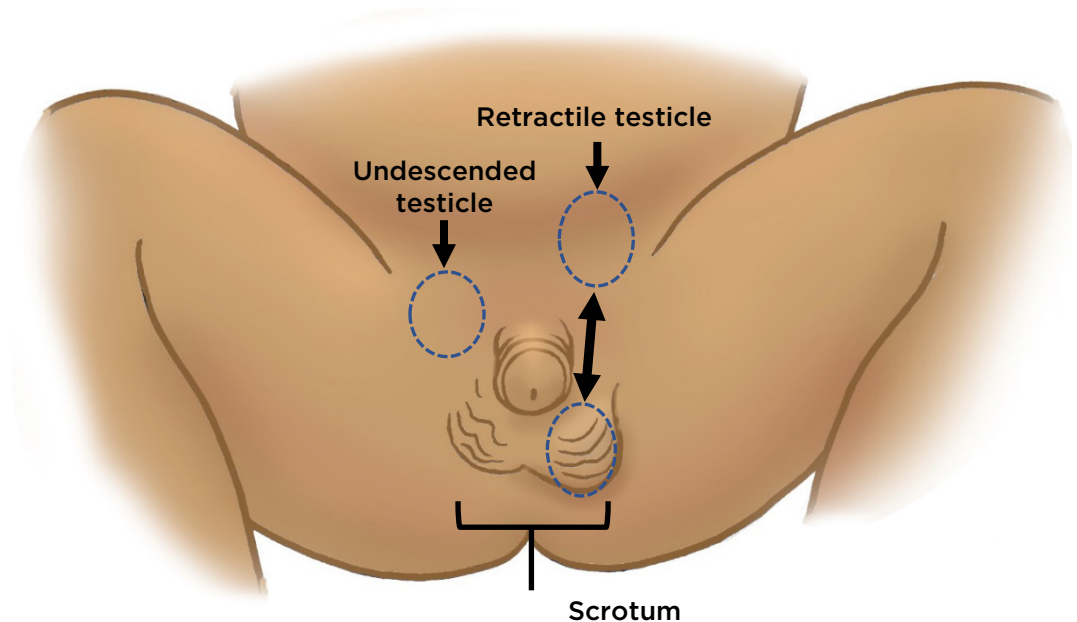
# Retractile Testicles

A retractile testicle moves freely between the scrotum and groin. This handout explains what it is, how to recognize the condition, and how we treat it.

## What is retractile testicle?

Testicles, also called testes, are 2 oval shaped glands that sit in the sac of skin (the scrotum) below the penis. They make sperm and produce hormones. Before a baby is born, the testicles grow inside the body, near the kidneys. During the last few months of pregnancy, they travel down into the scrotum.

A muscle pulls the testicle closer to the body as a reflex to protect it. In children with retractile testicles, 1 (or sometimes both) of the testicles may move up and down between the scrotum and lower belly (groin). When children have a retractile testicle, sometimes the testicle is visible in the scrotum and sometimes it is not. If a retractile testicle never descends, we call it an undescended testicle. Testicles should be in the scrotum by the time your child enters puberty.



**Retractile testicles can move between the scrotum and groin**

### To Learn More

- Urology  
206-987-2509
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org/patient-education](http://seattlechildrens.org/patient-education)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



### How do I know if my child has a retractile testicle?

A doctor must do a physical exam to determine if your child has a retractile testicle. You do not need a testicle ultrasound.

If your child's testicle(s) are not in their scrotum, your child's provider will try to gently push the testicle down from the lower belly (abdomen). To do this, they may put lotion on their fingertips and then slide their hand along the area of your child's belly from where the testicles are located. They will start putting firm pressure near the kidney and move down to the scrotum to feel for the testicle and see if they can feel it.

It's best if your child is relaxed and perhaps distracted with toys or other objects. Many times, we can arrange to have a Child Life Therapist to help support your child during this exam.

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### How do we treat retractile testicles?

Your doctor will need to perform testicle exams once a year as part of the well child visit. If your regular doctor has concerns, they may refer your child to a pediatric urologist to do a testicle exam.

If the testicle(s) remain undescended, we may recommend surgery - see our handout "Undescended Testicles."

[seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE984.pdf](https://seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE984.pdf)

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### What should my teenage child do if 1 or both testicles do descend?

For advice on how to do testicle self-exams, please read:

- How to Do a Testicular Self-Exam (Slideshow) – KidsHealth  
[kidshealth.org/en/teens/tse.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/tse.html)
- Testicular Self-Exam – Young Men's Health  
[youngmenshealthsite.org/guides/testicular-self-exam](https://youngmenshealthsite.org/guides/testicular-self-exam)