

Clinical Manifestations

A nonpalpable testis is typically observed by the parent or detected during routine physical examination by a nurse practitioner or physician. If one testis is not palpable, the affected hemiscrotum will appear smaller than the other. With bilateral nonpalpable testes, both hemiscrota appear small. In the case of retractile testes, the parents may report intermittently observing the testes in the scrotum, interspersed with periods when they cannot be visualized or palpated. Frequently, the retractile testis will be observed in the scrotum when the child is being bathed in warm water.

Diagnostic Evaluation

It is important to differentiate the true undescended testis from the more common retractile testis. Retractable testes can be “milked” or pushed back into the scrotum, but truly undescended ones cannot. For examination, the nurse can obviate the cremasteric reflex by placing the child in a squatting or cross-legged sitting position prior to checking the position of the testes.

Therapeutic Management

Although primary hormonal therapy with luteinizing hormone–releasing hormone (nasal spray) and human chorionic gonadotropin (injection) has been used more commonly in Europe, it is no longer recommended to induce testicular descent. Evidence shows low response rates and lack of long-term efficacy ([Kolon, Herndon, Baker, et al, 2014](#)). **Orchiopexy**, or surgical repositioning of the testis, is performed on palpable testes. Exploratory surgery may be required if the testis is not palpable. The goal of surgery is to place and fix viable undescended testes to a normal scrotal position or to remove nonviable testicular remnants. Scrotal positioning reduces the risk of torsion and trauma and permits easier examination of the testis, because there is an increased risk of testicular cancer despite treatment of undescended testes. In the routine surgical procedure for undescended testes, the testes are brought down into the scrotum and secured in that position without tension or torsion. A simple orchiopexy for a palpable testis can usually be performed as an outpatient. If exploratory surgery is needed to determine if a testis is present, an exam under anesthesia