

# Bitesize Guide to:

## **Testicular Torsion**

Testicular torsion is an emergency condition and can threaten the life of the organ. 1 in 4000 men under 25 years of age experience it a year. Although quite rare, it is important that all men are aware of the symptoms of testicular torsion as the earlier it is diagnosed the more likely it is the testicle can be saved.

### **What is it?**

The testicles are the two male organs behind the penis, contained in the protective pouch of skin known as the scrotum. Their job is the production of sperm and testosterone for reproduction. Testicular torsion occurs due to rotation and twisting of the testicle. This causes swelling and eventually cuts off the blood supply to the testicle.

Testicular torsion requires emergency surgery to save the testicle. If the torsion continues for more than 4-8 hours and the testicle undergoes irreversible damage it must be removed.

### **Who gets it?**

The most common incidence is in newborns and boys aged 12 to-18 years but it can occur in men of any age.

### **Why does it happen?**

Many cases of testicular torsion affect males with a condition called bell clapper deformity. Usually in men, the testicles have attachments to the scrotum making it difficult for them to twist. Those with bell clapper deformity have an attachment higher up meaning the testicles are free to rotate increasing the risk of the teste twisting.

Testicular torsion can occur after an injury to the scrotum, after strenuous exercise, whilst asleep. Frequently, there is no obvious cause.

### **Diagnosing Testicular Torsion**

If there is a sudden pain in your scrotum, call your doctor or get to a hospital as soon as possible. The doctor will listen to you describe your condition, ask about other symptoms, family history and examine your scrotum, testicles, abdomen and groin.

If there is suspicion of testicular torsion you will require emergency surgery without any other testing to save the testicle. Other tests that can be considered to look for other conditions include Ultrasound and urine or blood tests.

## Treating Testicular Torsion

Testicular torsion requires emergency surgery to explore the scrotum, this usually requires a general anaesthetic. If the testicle is untwisted and has not been permanently damaged it will then be fixed on one or both sides to prevent further twisting.

If the testicle has been twisted for too long and has permanent damage it will need to be removed with a procedure called an orchidectomy. Removing the testicle will not affect your sex life or ability to have children. You may be able to have a prosthesis fitted later on.

## 4 Key Facts about Testicular Torsion

1. Testicular torsion is an emergency, organ threatening condition.
2. Testicular torsion is more common in newborn boys and in boys aged 12-18 but can occur at any age.
3. The main symptom is sudden severe pain in the testicle.
4. There are 4 to 8 hours to save a testicle from when it twists, the sooner you come to hospital the better chance you have of saving it.

If you think you may have testicular torsion, speak to a healthcare professional immediately.

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