

# the **MALE GENITALIA** **GUIDE**

## **MALE GENITALIA DISEASE**

There are many different types of diseases that can affect the genitals. They can be classified by whether they are acquired (one caught it or developed the problem after birth) or congenital (one was born with it). The acquired diseases can be further classified by whether they are due to problems with inflammation (infection), cancer, blood flow, or some combination of problems leading to dysfunction.

## **ACQUIRED ABNORMALITIES**

Perhaps the most common disease affecting men is [sexual dysfunction](#). This is the failure to achieve adequate erection, ejaculation, or both. Men with sexual dysfunction may complain of loss of sexual desire (libido), difficulty or inability to initiate or maintain an erection (impotence), failure of ejaculation, [premature ejaculation](#), or an inability to achieve an orgasm.

Other than sexual dysfunction, some of the most common acquired diseases are infections caught from a partner during sexual contact.

Diseases such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, and HIV/AIDS are just some of the more common **sexually transmitted diseases**. (The photo shows the milky penile discharge of man with gonorrhea.) A detailed look at the major sexually transmitted diseases is beyond the scope of this guide, but is currently available in our [Sexually Transmitted Disease \(STD\) Online Guide](#). The guide shows photographs and gives detailed information on detecting, curing, and preventing common sexually transmitted diseases. With the exception of sexual abstinence, the regular and [correct use of condoms](#) is the best way to avoid the sexually transmitted diseases.



A non-sexually transmitted disease causing inflammation and rarely sterility is mumps. Though the mumps virus commonly causes only swelling of the salivary gland (parotitis), about 10% of men will get swelling of the testicle (**mumps orchitis**). Luckily, one of the childhood vaccinations protects us from mumps (the MMR immunization, or Measles, Mumps, and Rubella).

Skin abnormalities also affect the genitalia. Eczema and psoriasis can cause redness, scaling, and itchiness. Fungal infections, like **jock-itch** (tinea cruris) also affect the skin of the scrotum as pictured here. Treatment of this rash is with an antifungal medication. Other fungal infections, like **candida balantitis** is also treated with medication.



**Peyronie's disease** is the formation of scar-like tissue on the penis. This can lead to abnormal curvature and painful erections. Peyronie's disease is usually felt as a fibrous plaque on the underside of the penis. Surgical treatment by a urologist is often required in advanced cases.



The abnormal growth of cells (cancer) can afflict essentially any part of the male anatomy. **Testicular cancer** generally affects young to middle-aged adults and is the leading cause of death from solid cancers in men between the ages of 15 and 32. There are many different types of testicular cancer depending on which type of cell begins to grow abnormally. (The photo is of a patient with lymphoma that has spread to the testicle.) Testicular cancers have a good cure rate when caught early, so discovering the tumor is important. A testicular self-exam done monthly by all men aged 15 and older can detect these usually symptomless tumors. Click here to learn how to do a [testicular self-examination](#).

**Cancer of the penis** accounts for about 1% of all cancers in males. These cancers are usually slow growing, but can spread to surrounding lymph nodes and tissues making a cure more difficult. The photo shows a man with a cancer that has eaten away a significant amount of the tip of his penis. Obviously, any new or non-healing growth on the penis (or elsewhere), should be shown to your doctor. Check out our [Skin Cancer Guide](#) for more information and photographs.



**Prostate cancer** is the second most common cause of male cancer deaths (after lung cancer), and is most often found in men older than 50. The cancer seldomly produces symptoms until it spreads, so prostate screening (rectal exam and possibly a blood test) is important for early diagnosis and treatment.

## **CONGENITAL ABNORMALITIES**

Congenital problems with the male genitalia are caused during fetal development. The most common abnormality is failure of



the [urethral tube](#) to form correctly resulting in an additional hole in the penis. This additional hole is usually located on the underside (**hypospadias - pictured**) or top side (**epispadias**) of the penis and is usually not a significant problem. The result of having a hypospadias or epispadias is that urine and semen exit the penis from more than one site.

Another fairly common abnormality is a **phimosis**. This is defined as an abnormally small opening of the foreskin. It can be congenital or acquired (from infection). Having a phimosis is a problem because it can lead to further infection and even some types of cancer due to the chronic accumulation of secretions and other debris under the foreskin ([smegma](#)). A surgical incision or circumcision is the treatment of choice for phimosis. Congenital anomalies of the testicle also occur occasionally.

An **undescended testicle** (cryptorchidism) is the most common birth defect affecting up to 0.8% of newborn males (1 out of every 125). If the testicle has not descended into the scrotum by 1 year of age, it needs to be surgically lowered (or removed), as a large number of undescended testicles will become cancerous.

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