

Ambiguous Genitalia

FACTS:

- This is a condition when the sex of a baby is uncertain at birth because genitals may not appear clearly male or female.
- Development of the sex organs is a four step process in the growing fetus. Problems may arise at any of the four steps, causing malformations or incomplete growth.
- Hormonal imbalances and genetic disorders are often the cause.
- Males may have a very concealed, small or absent penis. The penis may also be "split open," as in hypospadias, and difficult to recognize. The testes may be hidden in the abdomen or undeveloped. The testes may look like female labia.
- Females may have enlarged tissue that resemble a small penis. The labia might be closed and resemble a boy's scrotum.
- Hormone imbalances may need to be treated.
- Sometimes children with ambiguous genitalia have an increased risk for tumors in the testes or ovaries.
- Blood tests are needed to determine the true sex of the child.
- The child should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.



A blood test can determine the true gender of a child.

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TREATMENT:

- Treatment options for children with this condition vary. Some doctors may perform surgery and recommend hormone replacement therapy. Others believe that no treatment should be started until the child can express his or her own wishes about what will be done to their body.
- Children with ambiguous genitalia should also be examined for underlying medical problems, such as salt losing disease, hormone imbalances and chromosomal abnormalities



Children with this condition should be treated normally.



Many children with this condition have been adopted.