BSUH Paediatric Clinical Practice Guideline

Penis Zipper Injury

Author: Jason Gray
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Background

A zipper injury occurs when the foreskin or scrotum becomes entrapped in the teeth of a zipper.

Assessment

Ensure appropriate analgesia prior to examination. Visual inspection of the injury will indicate if the skin is trapped between the teeth below the slider or trapped between the slider and teeth of the zipper.

Management

Consider Entonox / sedation and liberal application of topical anaesthetic.

(A) If skin is trapped between the teeth below the slider: Cutting the median bar of the zipper with wire cutters (available in main theatres). The median bar is the part at the top of the slider which joins the front and back plates of the slider. Once cut, the slider falls off and the zipper can be separated (1).

Alternatively, cutting through the material either side of the zipper below the entrapped skin and then cutting across the zipper with wire cutters/strong scissors. Then the zipper can be separated from below (2). If unsuccessful, keep child NMB and refer to paediatric surgical registrar.

(B) If skin trapped between the slider and teeth of the zipper: This requires liberal application of topical anaesthetic cream, then ease slider down. Always check for injury to the urethral meatus. If unsuccessful, keep child NMB and refer to paediatric surgical registrar.