

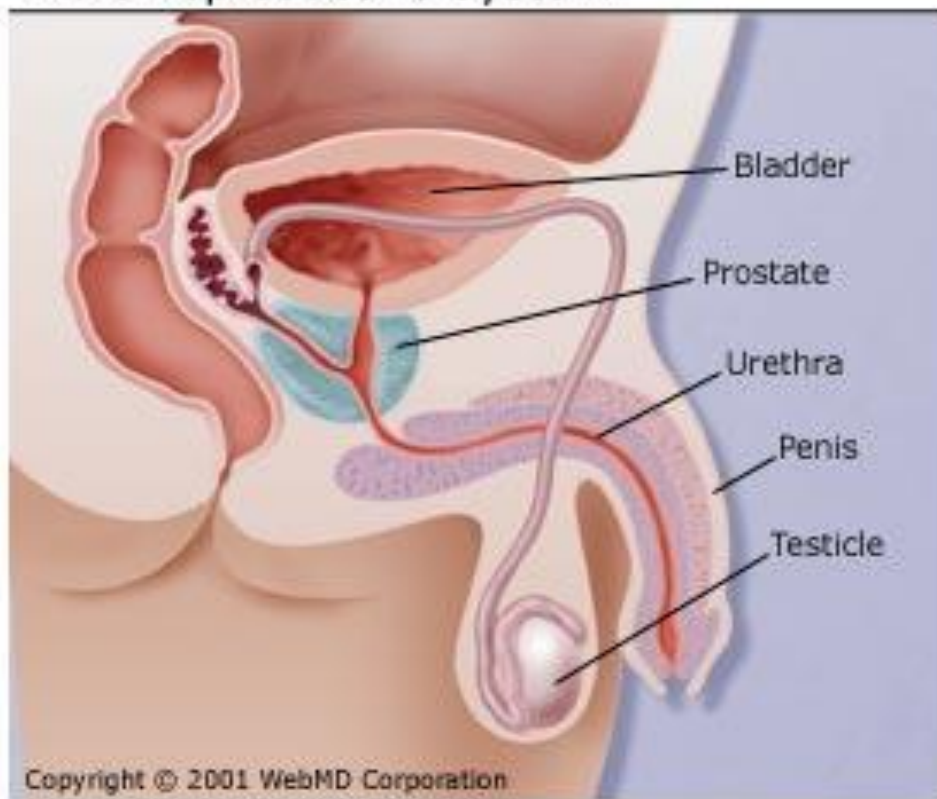
## REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

The reproductive system is a collection of organs that work together for the purpose of producing a new life. Scientists argue that the reproductive system is among the most important systems in the entire body. Without the ability to reproduce, a species dies.

The purpose of the organs of the male reproductive system is to perform the following functions:

- To produce, maintain, and transport sperm (the male reproductive cells) and protective fluid (semen)
- To discharge sperm within the female reproductive tract during sex
- To produce and secrete male sex hormones responsible for maintaining the male reproductive system

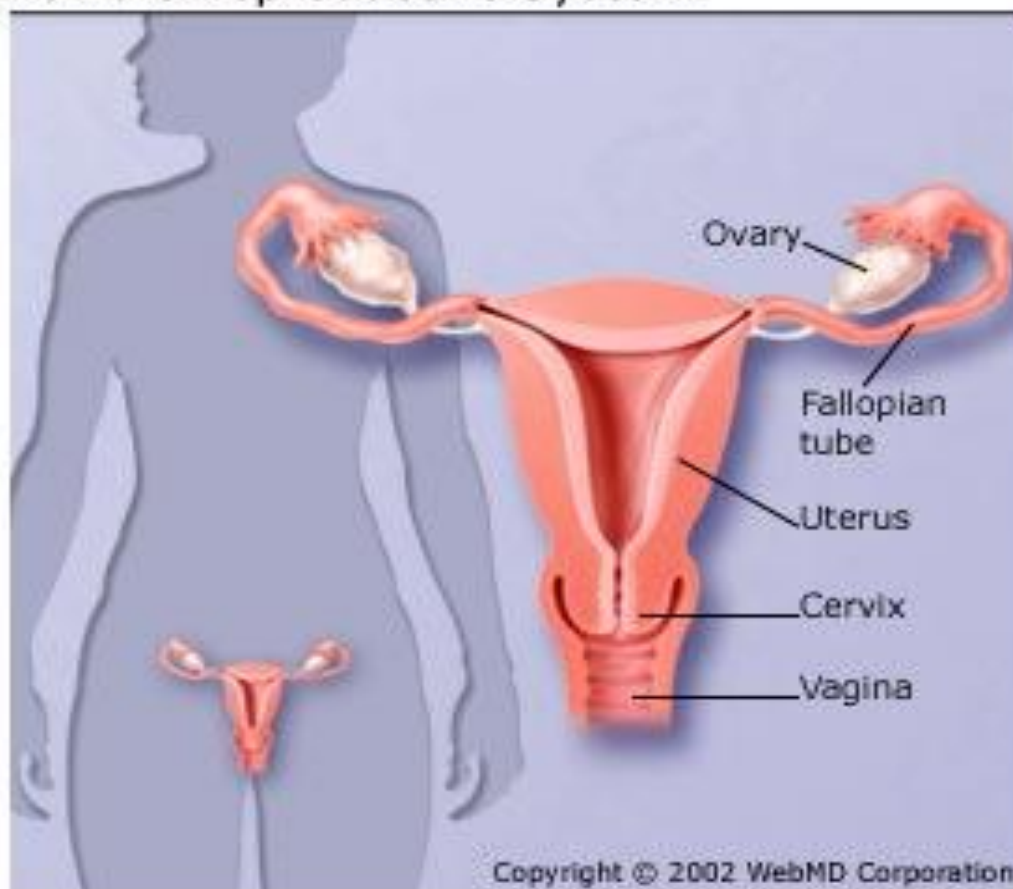
### Male Reproductive System



Unlike the female reproductive system, most of the male reproductive system is located outside of the body. These external structures include the penis, scrotum, and testicles.

The female reproductive system is designed to carry out several functions. It produces the female egg cells necessary for reproduction, called the ova or oocytes. The system is designed to transport the ova to the site of fertilization. Conception, the fertilization of an egg by a sperm, normally occurs in the fallopian tubes. The next step for the fertilized egg is to implant into the walls of the uterus, beginning the initial stages of pregnancy. If fertilization and/or implantation does not take place, the system is designed to menstruate (the monthly shedding of the uterine lining). In addition, the female reproductive system produces female sex hormones that maintain the reproductive cycle.

## Female Reproductive System



The two major parts of the female reproductive system are the vagina and uterus — which act as the receptacle for semen — and the ovaries, which produce the female's ova. The vagina is attached to the uterus through the cervix, while the Fallopian tubes connect the uterus to the ovaries. In response to hormonal changes, one ovum, or egg — or more in the case of multiple births — is released and sent down the Fallopian tube during ovulation. If not fertilized, this egg is eliminated as a result of menstruation.