

What is Circumcision?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a circumcision?

In male infants, a portion of the skin, called the foreskin, covers the end of the penis. Circumcision is a surgery done to remove the foreskin.

What are the benefits of circumcision for my newborn?

Many parents may choose to have their infant circumcised. Some reasons are:

- Religious and cultural, as practiced by Jewish and Islamic faiths.
- Family choice for males to appear like other males in the family
- Medical:
 - Lower risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs).
 - Lower risk for foreskin infections and cancer of the penis
 - Lower risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
 - Prevent phimosis (phi-mo-sis) the foreskin will not retract.
 - Ease of hygiene

What are the risks and reasons not to circumcise?

There are some minor risks related to the procedure. Parents may fear risks of:

- Bleeding
- Pain
- Infection
- Foreskin removal that appears too short or too long
- Decrease in sensitivity and sexual pleasure in the future

The foreskin may act to protect the tip of the penis and thus prevent irritation and problems with urination.

Will my doctor suggest that my infant be circumcised?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that existing evidence is not sufficient to recommend routine infant circumcision. This procedure may be done later in life but is associated with more risks. Talk to your doctors about your concerns and thoughts if you are undecided. If your infant was born premature or has other medical conditions your doctor will discuss these concerns with you.

When is the circumcision done?

The circumcision is done usually during the first few days of life. Your infant will be examined by your pediatrician prior to the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form for the circumcision.

What about pain during and after the circumcision?

Before the procedure, the obstetrician performing the circumcision may use a local anesthesia medication to numb the area around the penis. Your infant may also be given a pacifier dipped in sugar water which helps to soothe them during the procedure. After, your infant may find feeding, holding and rocking comforting. The use of other pain relief medications is usually not needed.

How do I care for the circumcision?

The tip of the penis will appear slightly swollen and red. There may be a small amount of blood on the diaper. This is normal for the first few hours after the circumcision. The nurse will be checking the circumcision (surgical site) and will assist you with the first diaper change. To care for the circumcised penis:

- Keep the area clean. Use warm water if the penis becomes soiled.
- Apply petroleum jelly to the infant's penis and the diaper area that touches the penis with each diaper change, for 3 to 4 days.
- After 3 to 4 days, you may notice a slight yellow coating on the tip of the penis. Do not wash the yellow crusts off. You may stop using the petroleum jelly at this time.

After I go home, when do I need to call the doctor?

Call your pediatrician for:

- No urine seen in diaper for over 8 hours
- Fever: temperature of 100.4 F or greater
- From the circumcision site
 - Constant bleeding
 - Signs of infection:
 - Increase in swelling or redness
 - Pus-filled blisters

Source:

American Academy of Pediatrics; www.aap.org

Healthy Children-Where We Stand: Circumcision, <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/decisions-to-make/pages/Where-We-Stand-Circumcision.aspx>.

Healthy Children-Ages and Stages: Caring for Your Son's Penis. <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/pages/Caring-For-Your-Sons-Penis.aspx>

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